

Nemo dat quod non habet

(No one can give what they do not possess)

**The faith development needs of the authentic and authoritative
Catholic teacher**

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ABSTRACT

Key Words: Catholic teachers, continuing professional development, faith development, Scottish education, Catholic education, leadership, symbolic leadership, evangelisation, catechesis, faith witness, identity, authentic teacher, authoritative teacher, socialisation, globalization, secularisation.

This study was set within the context of Catholic Education in Scotland; a context that holds a unique historic position, operating within the state education system. It investigated and explored the faith development experiences of Catholic teachers as they progressed from their initial teacher education programme through to full registration as qualified professionals, incorporating a one-year probationary period. A smaller comparative study was undertaken to add value to the theory that emerged from the main study. The research was phenomenological in nature and the qualitative research strategy adopted throughout was that of grounded theory, where the researcher used methods which allowed theory to emerge from the data. Data collection and analysis took place over a three-year period and the application of constant comparative analysis was implemented, where concepts were explored and their relationships investigated.

Based on their own personal narratives, the development of participants' faith was recorded during four key data collection and analysis stages which were given the titles, *Considering the journey ahead*, *From theory to practice*, *Socialisation: finding a voice* and *The Catholic teacher: authentic witness to faith*. Two faith development contexts were identified to enable Catholic teachers to be authentic and authoritative witnesses to their faith—concepts of self-realisation that aligned very much with the expectations of the Catholic Church. The first is the requirement to develop the teacher's knowledge and understanding of the Catholic tradition and the second, the ability to teach in an explicit and proactive faith environment where, through its leadership and overall culture, this has the potential to significantly impact upon an individual's faith. The study raises important questions surrounding the ongoing faith development of the Catholic teacher within the context of *continuing professional development*, given its unique position within the state system in Scotland.

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DEFINITIONS

CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CEC	Catholic Education Commission (Scotland)
CEO	Catholic Education Office (Australia)
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CREDL	Certificate in Religious Education by Distance Learning
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
NSW	New South Wales
RE	Religious Education
REC	Religious Education Coordinators (Australia)
SCES	Scottish Catholic Education Service
SEED	Scottish Executive Education Department
SMT	Senior Management Team
SOED	Scottish Office Education Department
TEI	Teacher Education Institutions
UCET	Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers

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(2 Timothy 1:5)

For Eileen and John Neeson, and John and Kathryn Coll.

My Grandparents.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been published or submitted in support of any degree or qualification.

Roisín Coll

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

‘Good teaching is charged with positive emotion. It is not just a matter of knowing one’s subject, being efficient, having the correct competencies or learning the right techniques. Good teachers are.... passionate beings who connect with their students and fill their work and their classes with pleasure, creativity and joy...’ (Hargreaves 1998:835).

Education reform continues to spread throughout the world like a policy epidemic (Levin 1998), where powerful agents and stakeholders contribute to the multitude of interrelated ideas that ultimately determine what educators and scholars will not only do, but who they are (Ball 2003). In recent years in the UK there has been criticism over a tendency to promote a ‘technicist’ or ‘performativity’ model of reform where teacher education programmes have focussed on producing educators expected to deliver ‘centrally packaged decisions’ that ignore or undermine the importance of them as unique individuals with existing experiences, perspectives, insights and personalities (ibid:217). Ball has advised of the dangers of this continued trend, where practitioners are expected to ‘set aside beliefs and commitments and live in an existence of calculation’ where they organise themselves as ‘a response to targets, indicators and evaluations’ (2003:215). He showcases the individual teacher and considers the effect that educational change can have on one’s social identity and refers to the ‘struggle over the teacher’s soul’ (ibid:217). Ball is not alone with his concerns. They can be placed in a wider and growing interest in what might be termed *the inner life of the teacher* and how this concept relates to the effectiveness and vitality of schools (Mills *et al* 2004, Dadds 1997, Voieis 1996). The focus of this thesis is on a related area—concerned with the attitudes, commitments and beliefs of a new generation of teachers choosing to embark on a career in faith-based schools.

The status of faith schools situated within secular, state-funded educational systems continues to stimulate strong and diverging opinions from a wide range of religious, social and cultural commentators throughout the United Kingdom and beyond (Judge, 2001). While much recent work has been done on the philosophical and ideological controversies surrounding faith-based schools and the legitimacy of their claims on state sponsorship (for example, Conroy, 2003), much less attention has been paid to those teaching within them, those on whom the continuation of the particular mission and purpose of faith-based schools arguably depends. Neglect of this area of study impedes a full understanding of the working environment of the faith-school and of the specific personal and professional needs of those choosing to work there.

This study is not concerned with the political or philosophical controversies surrounding faith-based or denominational education in the United Kingdom, which are well-rehearsed elsewhere (Gardner *et al*, 2003). It aims, instead, to investigate in some detail, the faith development needs of a new generation of Roman Catholic primary and secondary school teachers in Scotland. It will examine the experiences of this group of teachers as they make the transition from the final stages of a variety of initial teacher education (ITE) programmes to full registration as qualified teachers, a status which incorporates a one-year probationary period. The study is set within the context of the Scottish education system and, in particular, the Roman Catholic sector situated within that system.

Scotland has a unique position with regard to faith schools, since the state primary and secondary establishments falling into that category are all (with one or two exceptions) Roman Catholic. Unlike its neighbour south of the border or indeed elsewhere, where there are faith schools attached to a variety of different religions and denominations, Scotland's education system includes denominational schools almost exclusively for those belonging to the Roman Catholic tradition. At present there are Roman Catholic teachers employed in four hundred and three Roman Catholic state schools in the country.

For the purposes of this study and from this point onwards, the Roman Catholic Faith, and those belonging to it, will be referred to as 'Catholic'.

This study is situated within the phenomenological paradigm and has used an empirical methodology to generate grounded theory. Data was collected and analysed over a three-year period and the processes of continuous comparative analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) were applied, allowing for the exploration of emerging concepts and their relationships. The overarching research question was:

What are the faith-development needs of Catholic teachers in the evolving CPD structures of Scottish Teacher Education and how effectively are they being addressed?

Developments and changes in individuals' professional and personal life were captured in four different stages, each generating categories and concepts worthy of further exploration. A core category emerged for each stage and these were entitled: *Considering the Journey Ahead*, *From Theory to Practice*, *Socialisation: Finding a Voice* and *Catholic Teachers: Witnesses to Faith*. The transition from being a student teacher to being fully registered in the state education system was charted. During this period, the overall analysis and evaluation of the faith development of the participants revealed that, predominantly, there are two separate but contributing factors integral to the provision of faith development opportunities. The nature of both will be discussed at length in the thesis and it concludes that these factors ought to be accorded a higher profile within the pattern of the Catholic teacher's *professional* development.

The voices of twenty-six teachers dominate this study and it is important that they are heard within their appropriate context. Chapter Two therefore presents the background to the study, considering the historical, social, religious and professional context in which the teachers are placed. Its focus is the educational debate currently driving Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in Scotland's schools. It includes a comprehensive exposition of the Catholic Church's view of the teacher, from both a global and a Scottish perspective. It also discusses the historical context of Catholic schools in Scotland and their position in the current educational environment.

Chapter Three discusses the methodology adopted for conducting the research, and the essential decisions that directed its progress. The participants' accounts of their experiences were used as the primary source of data but a smaller, comparative dimension to the study was implemented where the perspectives of student and early career teachers in New South Wales, Australia were considered and compared with the participants from Scotland, in order to add value to the main findings. This chapter highlights the tools used to access the data, the role of the researcher and charts the chronology of data collection. The data collection stages includes a *pilot study*—where the views of school leaders are considered—and a stage that highlights the opinions of two senior Scottish

Catholic education representatives. The manner in which the data was analysed is also presented in this chapter.

Chapter Four discusses the pilot study that took place prior to conducting the main part of the research. The views of head teachers are considered in relation to the faith development of their staff and within the context of the new CPD provisions put in place for schools as a result of the McCrone Agreement (SEED 2001) on teachers' pay and conditions. The purpose for engaging in this process was primarily to test the methodology and develop the researcher's data collection technique. However, it also generated significant theory that contributed to guiding the main study and so was considered worthy to be included as a separate chapter in the thesis.

Chapter Five combines four stages of data collection and analysis from the main study. It explores the participants' differing religious identities and biographies and the faith development opportunities they encountered as they traversed from student to probationer, and from probationer to fully registered teacher. An increase in self-esteem and confidence was conveyed as they progressed through a socialisation process, and changes in attitudes and behaviour regarding their own faith were acknowledged and recorded. The roles of the state, the Church and of the school in supporting Catholic teachers are explored, along with the increasing confidence of participants as they are observed questioning current practice in this axis of their development. The study draws upon a wide range of literature in order to clarify and support the findings, serving as a secondary source of data and indeed a tool for validation.

Chapter Six introduces the comparative dimension to the study, and hears the voices of thirteen student or recently qualified Catholic teachers in New South Wales, Australia, as they reveal and reflect upon their emerging faith identities and dispositions. The impact of historical and sociological realities on individuals' faith identities is discussed, including the phenomenological concepts of 'parochial' and 'cosmopolitan' faith.

Chapter Seven focuses on the views of two senior Catholic education representatives. The first is a Bishop of one of Scotland's seven dioceses who is also the chairman of Scotland's Catholic Education Commission (CEC). The function of the CEC is to advise and assist Scotland's Conference of Catholic Bishops on all educational matters and to promote development in this particular field. The second is the director of the Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES), the CEC's operational agency. A conclusion to the study is presented in Chapter Eight.

Overall, this study concerns itself with identifying the faith needs of Catholic teachers in Scotland and charts the professional and personal experiences of the participants as they travelled through a journey of self discovery and change whilst embarking upon a career in the teaching profession. Most importantly, it allows them to tell their own story, where the interviews provide the opportunity for the participants to discuss *their* accounts of lived experiences, observations and reflections upon their faith—a subject very often considered to be personal and private. In conjunction with findings from the comparative stage and the opinions of the senior Church representatives, the accounts of these teachers were listened to attentively. An attempt was made to elucidate faith development needs in relation to their role as a Catholic teacher and the contextual circumstances and conditions that might affect addressing these needs.

Chapter 2

BACKGROUND TO STUDY

‘Remember your leaders...

Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.’

(Hebrews 13:7)

2.1 Introduction

The debate about faith schools is wide-ranging and has generated much educational discourse in recent years in the UK, a great deal of which presses its claim to public attention on the current expansion of such schools (Short 2002). The debate rarely focuses, however, on the role of the teacher in such schools, especially of those who are professedly members of the faith community in which they teach. This is a poorly understood part of the mosaic of faith education. The focus of this thesis is on the continuing professional development needs of the faith educator and in particular of the Catholic teacher in the Scottish education system. An important part of any such study is an exploration of the historical, social, religious and professional context in which these teachers are placed. The aim of this chapter, then, is to present the background to the study by considering the educational debate as it impacts upon the agenda currently driving Continuing Professional Development in Scottish schools. In addition, it will explore the Catholic Church's view of the Catholic teacher—from both a global and Scottish perspective—paying particular attention to the Church's expectations in terms of teacher development. Finally, it will discuss the evolution of Catholic schools within the state funded system in Scotland and their position in the current educational climate.

(This is an important point at which to clarify nomenclature. For the purposes of this study the word 'Church'—unless otherwise indicated—stipulates the hierarchy of the Catholic Church in its teaching capacity.)

2.2 Continuing Professional Development in Scotland

Professional development of Scotland's teachers has attracted increasing attention in recent years. The Sutherland Report (HMSO 1997) observed that career-long professional development had been neglected, that it required attention and that consideration should be given to the creation of a national framework focusing on teachers' Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Since Sutherland, professional development opportunities for Scotland's teachers have changed quite considerably. In 2001 agreement was reached at governmental level following recommendations made in the McCrone Report (SEED 2000) that all of Scotland's teachers should be committed to maintaining

and developing their professional expertise by adhering to an agreed programme of CPD. An additional 35 hours of individual CPD per annum was to be introduced, in which a clearly structured agreed individual plan for CPD would be composed after an annual professional review with the line manager. The intention was that the plan would

‘consist of an appropriate balance of personal professional development, attendance at nationally accredited courses, small scale school based activities or other CPD activity. This balance will be based on an assessment of individual need taking account of school, local and national priorities and shall be carried out at an appropriate time and place’ (SEED 2001:7).

Teachers would be expected to maintain a CPD portfolio to record the range of activities in which they would participate.

The McCrone Report and subsequent Agreement (SEED 2001) made a commitment to ‘developing and supporting’ the teaching profession for two reasons. Firstly it aimed to ‘enhance the opportunities’ available to teachers in Scottish schools and secondly, it sought to ‘minimise the incidence of teachers undertaking work which is not directly related to their key role in teaching and learning’ (ibid, p16). The Agreement also gave particular focus to ensuring that appropriate CPD opportunities would exist for probationer teachers in pursuit of their full registration, along with those teachers wishing to progress in their career in being awarded the title ‘Chartered Teacher’— an initiative that provides a promotion structure for those teachers choosing to remain in the classroom rather than pursuing school management posts. The Agreement commenced in August 2003.

Since its implementation, the major stakeholders in the field of CPD in Scotland have responded vigorously to the McCrone Agreement. For example, local authorities and Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) spent time developing CPD courses in an attempt to attract schools and teachers in this very lucrative business, in addition to responding to the recommendation of ensuring that Scotland’s teachers would be given appropriate opportunities for CPD that are ‘applicable and accessible’ to all (SEED 2001:16).

The Scottish Executive worked with stakeholders to establish a national framework for CPD with the intention of helping teachers to ‘identify and access relevant, high-quality development opportunities that enable them to meet their full potential’ (Scottish Executive, 2002:2).

It can be argued, then, that the whole thrust of the CPD agenda in Scotland for the last 10 years has been to position and empower individual head teachers as managers and coordinators of the professional development of their staff (Humes 2001). It has been claimed that Local Authorities previously paid lip service only to CPD (Marker 1999) but this has changed and the McCrone Agreement has contributed to raising its profile even further. ‘Continuing professional development (CPD) should be a condition of service including every teacher having a commitment to CPD, with individual CPD plans agreed once a year with the immediate manager, and teachers maintaining a personal record of CPD’ (SEED 2001: para 4.1).

Underpinning this agreement was a vision for a change in culture where the teacher would have more autonomy and would be involved in important decision making processes at school and national level, therefore elevating their professional prestige (SEED 2001: 28). It appeared to challenge the ‘top-down’ model where—through initiatives such as the chartered teachers’ programme—the classroom teacher as well as those in managerial posts would be considered the experts in learning and teaching and would, among other things, be included when agreeing ‘the range of collective activities contributing to the wider life of the school on a collegiate basis’ (SEED 2001: 29). According to McDonald (2004), McCrone appeared to provide an opportunity for the dominant and often criticised culture of compliance and hierarchy to give way to a ‘culture of collegiality’ (p414).

Interestingly, a recent report on the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Agreement, carried out by Audit Scotland and Her Majesty’s Inspectorate, indicates that while there have been positive changes in terms of support systems for staff and better CPD provision (Audit Scotland

2007), uptake and participation have been patchy and that teaching staff have not seen professional development as relevant to their needs (Draper and Sharp, 2006).

2.2.1 Criticism of the Continuing Professional Development Framework in Scotland

Critics have argued that the creation of a national framework for CPD in Scotland has resulted in the *limitation* of the range of opportunities available to teachers and that this curbs teacher autonomy. It is claimed that it has succumbed to the ‘culture of performativity’ (Ball, 2003:219), with its stress on appraisal systems, target setting and output comparisons and that the CPD opportunities in Scotland reflect this. According to these critics, the framework that has been introduced in Scotland relies mainly on a skills-based or competence-based model, an approach that includes CPD activities that can be assessed and accredited. Indeed the terminology used throughout the Scottish Executive’s document ‘*Continuing Professional Development*’ (2003) would suggest that competence and skills are higher on the CPD agenda rather than reflection, personal research and other such ventures concerned with what has been referred to as the ‘fundamentals’ of teaching (Coll, 2006). For example, when explaining ‘Why CPD?’ the document states;

If higher standards are to be reached... it is essential that teachers are well prepared for their work and that they have the opportunities to refresh and enhance their skills throughout their careers.

It continues:

CPD is intended to support teachers and to equip them with the skills and knowledge required to keep pace with the rapid changing educational and professional environment. (Scottish Executive, 2003:7)

As many have suggested, (eg Humes 2001), rather than initiating CPD programmes that are intellectually challenging and rigorous, the focus appears to be on a preoccupation with practicalities and relevance that can often result in teachers’ professional knowledge being ‘controlled, devalued and even deskilled’ (Sachs and Logan 1990: 479). This is not to downgrade technical skill-based and

subject focused CPD courses since they are important for successful learning and teaching to survive and develop. However, as Hoban (2002) has articulated, professional development programmes that do not challenge teachers to explore or verbalise *why* they teach in a certain way or encourage teachers to think outside of their own environment can result in teachers becoming conditioned to expect one-off courses that deliver information to them as passive learners. Hoban (2002: 170) warns of the policy makers who ‘continually demand that standards for teaching should be based on a mastery of technical skills and knowledge...rather it is how, when and why skills and knowledge are applied that requires professional judgement and is the heart and soul of teaching.’ Cited in Fullan (1991), Loucks-Horslet *et al* argue that ‘when staff development emphasises an idea or an approach without considering the person(s) who will implement it, the design and results are weakened’ (p319). There is a danger then, that the needs of teachers are lost and forgotten in an ‘overly systematic structure’ (Livingston & Robertson 2001: 194).

The CPD framework in Scotland, then, has been criticised for being too tightly controlled by the Government, which has in practice resulted in a ‘top down’ model where the teacher is addressed as *technician*. Head teachers are accused of ‘playing the game’ (Ball, 2003: 221) as they encourage staff to be engaged in activities that inspectors want to see and which will be hailed and rewarded by school improvement. The danger of this is that teachers, and indeed school managers, will ignore their personal opinions about teaching and learning in the belief that the visions and experiences of others are better than their own. Increasingly they respond to the ‘expert’ outside and deny that there may be an expert within. This heteronomous model treats professionals like empty vessels, ‘ignoring that they bring experiences, practices, perspectives, insights and anxieties about the highly complex nature of their work’ (Dadds 1997: 31).

The debate as to whether the current CPD framework in Scotland focuses on producing autonomous and more professional teachers or encourages them to adopt a more subordinate persona to comply with hierarchical wishes (McDonald, 2004) is an ongoing one and it is within this context that the interviewees involved in this study are placed.

In addition to being a part of the state system and responding to national and local educational developments, teachers in Scotland wishing to teach in Catholic schools also have a ‘duty’ to respond to expectations from the Church. What follows is an exposition of the Catholic Church’s view of the Catholic teacher and what it expects of that person in terms of disposition, character and professional development.

2.3 Catholic Education

Edward B Jordan (1942) claims that the one characteristic, distinguishing Catholic Education from other educational systems worldwide, is that, from its earliest days and throughout the centuries (with few exceptions), all of the adherents of the Catholic faith agreed on its basic philosophical principles of education. Taking philosophy of education as the interpretation of ‘an organized body of convictions’ that considers aims, purpose, goals, and values, he suggests that the Catholic position on such matters has not varied over the centuries and that any changes that have occurred have been associated with ‘secondary objectives’ (p3). Pope Pius V, in the introduction to the Catechism of the Council of Trent in 1567, stated that the ends of religious instruction within the Catholic faith are, ‘a knowledge of Christ, observance of the commandments and love of God’ (Rummery, 1975:30). Echoing this, over four hundred years later, the Second Vatican Council’s Declaration on Christian Education (*Gravissimum Educationis*, 1965) explained that those being educated in the faith should be, ‘introduced to the knowledge of the mystery of salvation... learn how to worship God the Father in spirit and truth....bear witness to the hope that is in them but also how to help in the Christian formation of the world...’ (para 2).

This consistent ‘body of convictions’ is based on an understanding of the meaning and purpose of life that Jesus Christ—the person on whom Christianity is founded—gave to mankind, where eternal truth was proclaimed and a clear path was given as to how to attain it. *‘I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through me’* (John 14:6). He explained to his Apostles the nature of man, society and of truth—a philosophy of life that has also been claimed to be a philosophy of education (Jordan, 1942; Arthur, 1995;

Murphy, 2006), and it is upon the understanding of this that Catholic Education is based.

2.3.1 Scriptural roots

The Roman Catholic Church uses its sacred scriptures to formulate the basic principles of Christian pedagogy. It claims that the New Testament is rich in educational wisdom and is a support to any Christian educator. There, Christ can be found establishing a teaching Church; during his three-year period in active ministry he is engaged in daily conversation with his Apostles, those appointed by him to follow him and to carry on his work once he had ‘ascended’. The Gospels reveal Christ being referred to by his Apostles as ‘*Rabbi*’ (John 1:38) which means ‘teacher’ and his work exemplifies this since we observe him educating them, supporting them, clarifying their thinking during special ‘seminars’ and illustrating how to teach others. After his Resurrection, Christ gave his mission to his Apostles; he commissions them to go and ‘*teach all nations*’ authentically and authoritatively and to observe all of his commands. He promises that they will never be alone since he will always be with them, ‘*to the end of time*’ (Matthew 28:19-20). Indeed, there are many ancient images depicting Jesus as a teacher and ‘*Christ the Teacher*’ (Figure 1.1) is one of the best-known presentations of Jesus in Byzantine iconography. Here he is depicted holding a Gospel which declares, ‘*I am the light of the world. He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life*’. Christ is seen blessing the beholder. The image was written to remind followers that Jesus Christ teaches all that they need know, through the Gospels, through prayer and through the people that are met in daily life.

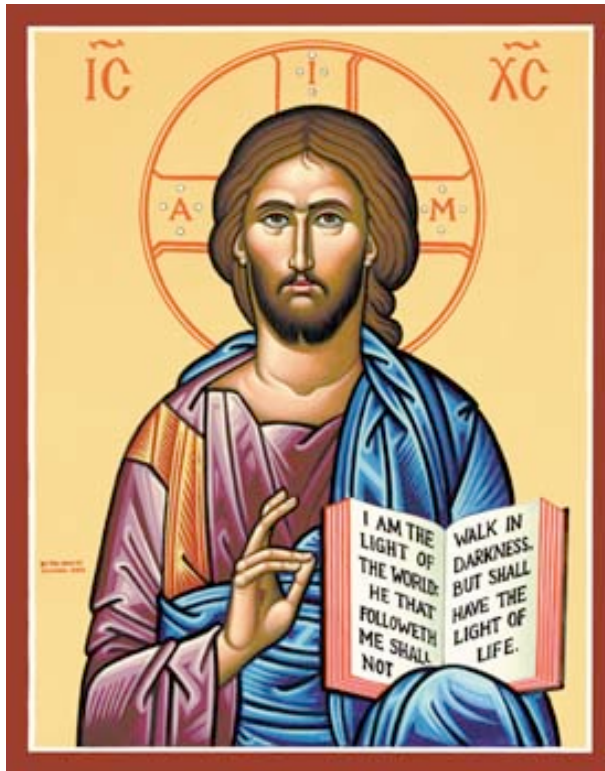


Figure 1.1: Christ the Teacher

The mission of the Church, then, is considered a continuity of the mission of Christ. *'As the Father has sent me, so I send you'* (John 20:21). From the very beginning, the recognition of this fact by Christians has moved them to give public witness to their faith in Jesus Christ and to teach them the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Today, all Christians are expected to play their part in that same mission. *'I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from the Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide'* (John 15:15-16). Education in the Faith is considered part of that mission.

The Church considers the story of Christianity and its expansion as a record of the Apostles' achievements as teachers and of their ability to ensure the continuation of a teaching office. In the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles (found in the New Testament) the educating activities of the early Christians are evident where the teachings of Christ are passed on with what could be interpreted as great passion and conviction. They are found advising, converting, catechising, evangelising and teaching with authority the messages proclaimed

by Christ in the name of God, whom he claimed to be his father (for example, 1Corinthians 12:9; 1Timothy 4:1-5; Titus 3:8). The successors of the Apostles and those charged with the responsibility of continuing to teach in the name of Christ were referred to as the ‘elders’ or ‘bishops’ which literally means ‘overseer’ (Titus 1: 7-9). That title has remained unchanged and the main duty of the bishop in the Roman Catholic Church today honours Christ’s expectation of his followers: to teach authentically and authoritatively. The Pope and bishops’ interpretation of what they believe is the ‘truth’ is known as the ‘Magisterium’—the teaching authority of the Church—and these teachings are transmitted to followers.

The Vatican has administrative departments responsible for different aspects of the Church’s ministry. One of these is the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, which, among other things, has the authority to advise and guide Catholic teachers on matters of education. The Church relies heavily on its members to assist in the transmission of this ‘truth’ and its Catholic schools and those teaching within them are central to the proclamation of Christ and his teachings.

2.3.2 The Aim of Catholic Education

Cunnane (2004) highlights the importance of viewing schooling as only one aspect of education arguing that ‘education is an interplay of life forms, only one of which is the school’ (p12). For the purposes of this research, however, it is the school context that will be investigated and referred to when the concept of ‘education’, ‘Catholic education’ or ‘religious education’ is discussed.

The Church considers education to be its concern since, ‘as a mother, it is obliged to provide for its children an education in virtue of which their whole lives may be inspired by the spirit of Christ’ (*Gravissimum Educationis* 1965:3). The Declaration on Christian Education along with *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) emphasises a change in the role of Catholic education within modern society, moving from an isolated position which viewed Catholic schools acting as a bulwark against an increasingly secular society (*Divini Illius Magistri*, 1929)

towards the view that the Catholic school has a very positive contribution to make to society which will be of benefit to the wider world.

The aim of Catholic Education and of the Catholic school is to contribute to the ‘Salvific Mission’ of the Church; that is to proclaim the Gospel as ‘the way, the truth and the life’ (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977: para 5). God’s teaching, revealed through Scripture describes the purpose of one’s existence as being the development of oneself to ‘the fullest extent of human nature’ (Morris, 1998: 94). ‘Perfection’ is what is strived for and this is based on an understanding of Scripture, *‘be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect’*, (Matt 5:48). Catholic education, then, has a role in achieving this; ‘true education is directed towards the formation of the human person in view of his final end and the good of society to which he belongs, and in the duties which as an adult, he will have to share. (Gravissimum Educationis, 1965: para 1)

Recently, when addressing an audience in the Catholic University of America in Washington D.C, Pope Benedict XVI referred to the Catholic school as ‘a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth’ (2008:1). This echoes what was said in his address to the Diocese of Rome, when he explained that Catholic education should allow a child to ‘meet Jesus Christ and to establish a lasting and profound relationship with him’ which is central to the ‘formation of a person to enable him or her to live to the full and to make his or her own contribution to the common good’ (2007: 3).

The Church has affirmed the Catholic school as being at its heart and has increased awareness of its ecclesial identity in the modern world. Where decline in Sunday Mass attendance in the UK and elsewhere continues to be observed, Catholic schools—worldwide—remain full (Johnson & Castelli, 2000) and so as ‘a genuine instrument of the Church,’ these schools are expected to ‘fulfil their vocation’ and provide a ‘genuine experience of Church’ for Catholic children (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997: para 11).

Unsurprisingly then, the role of the teacher is considered by the Church as central to the success of the Catholic school in fulfilling its mission. Literature

from the Church will now be presented in an attempt to outline its expectation of the Catholic teacher.

2.3.3 The Expectation of the Catholic Educator

There are many documents written by the Catholic Church about Catholic education and the role of the Catholic teacher. Consideration of these documents presents those choosing to embark on a career in Catholic education with a clear 'job description'. The Church recognises that Catholic teachers, like those teaching in secular schools, should have the best possible academic qualifications, a thorough knowledge and understanding of their subject, in addition to competence and skill in the transmission of that knowledge. However, an additional expectation of these teachers exists, one that focuses on their personal identity and disposition; an expectation of which they should be aware. The Second Vatican Council's *Declaration on Christian Education* states that:

'Let teachers realise that to the greatest possible extent, they determine whether the Catholic school can bring its goals and undertakings to fruition. They should, therefore, be trained with particular care so that they may be enriched with both secular and religious knowledge... Bound by charity to one another and to their students, and penetrated by an apostolic spirit, let them give witness to Christ, the unique Teacher, by their lives as well as by their teachings.' (*Gravissimum Educationis*, 1965, para 8)

In the most recent declaration, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997), the importance of the contribution of teachers to the continued promotion of the Faith is presented once more:

In the Catholic school, "prime responsibility for creating this unique Christian school climate rests with the teachers, as individuals and as a community"...Moreover, we must remember that teachers and educators fulfil a specific Christian vocation and share an equally specific participation in the mission of the Church, to the extent that "it depends chiefly on them whether the Catholic school achieves its purpose". (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, para 19).

and;

'Teaching has an extraordinary moral depth and is one of our most excellent and creative activities. For the teacher does not write on

inanimate material, but on the very spirits of human beings' (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education 1998: 19).

Benedict XVI has spoken of the challenges facing Catholic educators but reminds them of the promise of the permanent abiding of Christ with his teachers, 'I am with you always...to the end of time' (Matthew 28:20).

We must always be aware that we cannot carry out such a task with our own strength but only with the power of the Spirit. We need enlightenment and grace that come from God and act within hearts and consciences. For education and Christian formation, therefore, it is above all, prayer and our personal friendship with Jesus that are crucial: only those who know and love Jesus Christ can introduce their brothers and sisters into a living relationship with him (Benedict XVI, 2007:4).

For the Church, then, the Catholic teacher is someone who is walking with children on their journey of faith and, in order to do so effectively, must give witness to their own faith and continue on their personal faith journey. According to Benedict XVI, the 'figure of witness and role of witnessing is central' to Catholic education, since a witness is not simply involved in the transmission of information but is personally engaged with what he believes is the truth, 'and through that coherence of his own life, becomes a dependable reference point' (2007:6). He stresses the importance of the Catholic teacher's relationship with Christ and God, explaining that this is the 'fundamental condition' for carrying out their responsibility in educating effectively. However, the role of the Catholic teacher in educating in the faith is not to refer to him/herself, but rather to Christ, and so an 'authentic' educator is to model him/herself on 'Jesus Christ, the witness of the Father who said nothing about himself but spoke as the father had taught Him' (Benedict XVI, 2007:6).

'I do nothing of my own accord. What I say is what the Father taught me.' (John 8:28)

According to the Code of Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church, the Catholic teachers in Catholic schools should be

Outstanding in true doctrine and uprightness of life' (Codex Iuris Canonici (1983: 803)

2.3.4 Lay Catholic teachers.

The Church has recognised the continual decline in the number of religious (a commonly used term for those who are ordained or consecrated to the priesthood or religious life) working in Catholic schools worldwide and has strongly asserted the importance of lay Catholic teachers ('lay' being distinguished from 'clergy') emphasising that they have a specific vocation within the Church, one which should be nourished and supported (Franchi, 2007:31). In a document concerned with discussing the role of the Catholic lay teacher, the Church's expectation is clear;

The Catholic Educator must be a source of spiritual inspiration...The Lay Catholic educator is a person who exercises a specific mission within the Church by living the faith, a secular vocation in the communitarian structure of the school: with the best possible professional qualifications, with an apostolic intention inspired by faith, for the integral formation of the human person, in communication of culture, in an exercise of that pedagogy which will give emphasis to direct and personal contact with students (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education 1982:14).

The Church recognises the challenge this presents. Where clergy have traditionally been well versed in the teachings of the Church and have had strong religious formation prior to entering the classroom, lay Catholic teachers have not experienced parallel support although the expectation of them is as strong.

'all too frequently, lay Catholics have not had a religious formation that is equal to their general, cultural and most especially, professional formation' (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education 1982:60).

For the Church, the development of teachers' faith is central to effectively carrying out their role.

In summary, the Church's expectation of the Catholic teacher is clear. It is someone who is inspired by the Apostles; believes in the mission of the Church; accepts their vocation within that mission; knows and loves Jesus Christ; is engaged in prayer; develops their own faith; is prepared to accompany their students on their journey of faith; will give witness to Christ their role model and

is committed to helping children get to know Jesus Christ and develop a lasting relationship with him.

2.4 The Catholic Community in Scotland

It is important in a study of this nature that the social and religious backgrounds of the participants are explored. Indeed this will be considered in more depth later in the thesis, but at this stage it is worth introducing the Scottish Catholic community.

Much has been written about identity in Scotland and in particular that of the Catholic community (Bradley, 2004; Boyle and Lynch, 1998; Devine, 2000). This community has recently expanded owing to the influx of immigrants from Central Europe and therefore consists of a combination of several ethnic groups with strong Catholic roots. However, despite remaining a minority entity in an increasingly secular country, the Catholic community has a significant presence in Scotland and the Catholic Church has become a well-established institution (Boyle and Lynch, 1998). The community has its origins in the survival of the Catholic tradition post-reformation, but the immigration of Italians, Poles, Lithuanians and Irish has been the major contributing factor. There are a number of Catholic communities in the Highlands and Islands as well as the North East of the country. However, Catholics of Irish origins are the largest segment of Scotland's Catholic community and are concentrated particularly in the West-central region of the country. This influx of Irish Catholics had an impact on the education system and as Bradley (2004) argues, the Catholic Schools system was created as a direct result of this.

When the Irish first came to Scotland they were often subjected to much hostility as was their 'alien and often detested faith' (Bradley, 2004, p20). Indeed, this was not just confined to Scotland but to other parts of the UK. Morris (1998) explains that Catholic communities suffered long periods of 'persecution, repression and social segregation' and that they experienced religious prejudice 'akin to racism' (p92). It has been argued that the struggle to survive and thrive in Scotland has resulted in the well-established and strengthened identity of this community to the present day. While it has also been claimed that social and

economic change has led to the integration and acceptance of the Catholic community into Scottish society, there still exists a belief that a struggle against discrimination continues since there are entrenched anti-Catholic sentiments in society (Rolheiser, 1994). This claim has been well documented in recent years (MacMillan, 2000). A high proportion of Scotland's teachers in Catholic schools come from this Catholic community situated in the West-Central belt of the country including, understandably, 85% of those selected for the purpose of this research. These Catholic teachers are employed by the state and are part of the Scottish education system, but they work within the Catholic sector of that system, the origins of which will now be presented.

2.4.1 Catholic schools in Scotland

The Catholic Education Commission (CEC) works on behalf of the Roman Catholic Bishops of Scotland in setting national policy on all educational matters. Its operational agency is the Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES), which, among other things, works to offer support and guidance to schools and Catholic teachers in Scotland and develop and implement plans for the development of Catholic education.

It could be argued that the Catholic Church has a very healthy position within educational provision in Scotland. Enshrined in law, Scottish Catholic schools are able to enjoy the benefits of full state funding without conceding their Catholic ethos. They are administered in exactly the same way as those in the nondenominational sector, through the local authorities, and are fully accountable to the state in terms of standards, policy implementation, leadership and performance, which are inspected and monitored as are all other Scottish state-schools. However, Catholic schools are able to preserve their distinctive identity and faith-based mission since the Church has jurisdiction over the employment of staff in Catholic schools and the content of the Religious Education (RE) curriculum. This is a position that it has enjoyed since 1918.

2.4.2 The Historical Context

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Catholic schools in Scotland were staffed by unqualified, underpaid teachers and served a destitute—and mostly Irish—

population. In 1872 the Church had rejected the invitation to transfer its control to the state on the grounds that the denominational character of the schools would not be preserved, even with the promise that individual schools retained the right to determine their religious nature if they so wished. The Church found this unacceptable. Their schools were very poorly resourced both financially and academically and indeed would have benefited from the lifting of this burden. However, it balanced this with the guaranteed faith dimension of education that the children were receiving in these schools, something about which the community felt strongly (Coll & Davis 2007).

The Catholic minority paid general and local taxes but did not avail itself of the state education facilities until the government recognised that the community was being unfairly treated on the grounds of conscience. Eventually, and after much controversy (O'Hagan 2006; O'Hagan & Davis 2007), the Scotland Act of 1918 was passed, giving Catholic children the same formal educational opportunities found in the nondenominational schools. The schools were to be fully funded and maintained by the state but the Church was given control over the religious education curriculum and the appointment of teachers. This position has remained largely unchanged for almost a century.

Catholic schools in Scotland today are somewhat different to those that existed at the turn of the twentieth Century. As a result of immigration and the effects of secularisation, Catholic schools now teach children from a range of cultural and religious backgrounds. In addition to those parents who are practising Catholics, parents of children from many ethnic communities choose to send their children to the Catholic sector, resulting in some classes being very multicultural. Indeed in a minority of Scottish Catholic schools, the school roll can consist of children from predominantly non-Catholic—or even non-Christian—backgrounds. It is also recognised that of those who are baptised 'Catholic', many children attending such schools come from families where traditional practices are *not* observed, the most obvious of these being Mass attendance.

2.4.3 Approval

As a result of the 1918 Education (Scotland) Act, and owing to the Church's control over the appointment of staff, potential teaching staff in Catholic schools must satisfy the Church that they are suitable in 'belief and character' (Great Britain Statutes (1918) Education (Scotland) Act). They are also subject to a stringent approval process. Anyone teaching RE must be an approved *practising* Catholic (all those teaching in Catholic primary schools fall into this category). Moreover, the Catholic Church requires to be assured that *all* other appointed teachers, whether Catholic or not, are committed to the promotion and support of the Catholic school's mission, aims, values and ethos. Approval therefore is also required for non-Catholic staff. The process involves a reference from a priest (or for non Catholics, a professional) who can testify to the commitment of the individual.

At present there are over seven thousand approved Catholic teachers in Scotland employed in 403 Catholic state schools.

2.4.4 Qualification in Catholic Education.

In addition to being 'approved', there is the expectation that Catholic teachers wishing to teach Religious Education in the Catholic sector obtain their 'Catholic Teachers' Certificate'. This certificate indicates to the Bishops Conference that an individual is adequately equipped to teach Religious Education in the Catholic school. Teachers in Scotland wishing to gain this certificate usually choose to study their Initial Teacher Education (ITE) course (either four-year undergraduate honours degree courses or a one-year professional diploma) at the Faculty of Education at the University of Glasgow. This faculty is the only one in Scotland that has the formal responsibility for providing Catholic teachers for Catholic schools and therefore the Religious Education component of these courses is heavily focused on the Catholic faith. Upon satisfying the subject's academic requirements (which includes being observed teaching RE in a Catholic school), in addition to the Catholic Teachers' formation course, students are awarded the Catholic Teachers' Certificate. The only other way of obtaining this certificate is through CREDL (Certificate in Religious Education by

Distance Learning)—a distance learning course offered by the same educational institution.

2.5 Summary

This chapter has presented a background to, and context for, this particular study by discussing the current professional development climate in the Scottish education system and by introducing the Catholic Church's expectation of education, and of Catholic teachers, from both a global and local perspective. This background and context has influenced the choice of methodology adopted to conduct the study—a detailed account of which, now follows.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

‘The fundamental rationale for developing the educational research profession should be to improve the quality of research so that it may better serve the education sector’ (Evans, 2002: 228).

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the methodological approach taken throughout the conduct of this study and to present the decisions that ultimately affected the direction of the research. It will introduce the participants, explaining how they became involved in the study as well as outlining the depth of this contribution. A detailed account of the data collection methods employed will be presented, along with a thorough explanation of how the data were analysed. The ethical issues taken into consideration during the research will be discussed, in addition to clarifying the role and position of the researcher. The way in which literature is used throughout the study will also be explained.

The purpose of this study was to identify the faith development needs—if any—of Catholic educators within the Scottish state schools' system. The overarching research question was:

What are the faith-development needs of Catholic teachers in the evolving CPD structures of Scottish Teacher Education and how effectively are they being addressed?

3.2 Conceptualisation

Evans (2002) believes that, 'too many educational researchers produce second-rate work and there are, for the most part, too few checks against this occurring' (p44). One way of ensuring that research is not 'second-rate' is by paying particular attention to—and taking seriously—the issue of *conceptualisation*—that is, ensuring that there is clarity over the exact meaning of key terms when they are being referred to. Of equal importance is the communication of this meaning to others engaged in the research activity. Evans claims that the implications of ignoring this can include the quality of the research being impoverished. She states, 'conceptual clarity is an essential methodological tool—essential, that is, if research is to be rigorous' (ibid: p49).

In this study it was important from the outset to identify key concepts and establish that their meanings were understood. This ensured that the researcher was actually researching what she was intending to research and that the

participants and herself were on the same wavelength. Wilson and Wilson (1998) advise of the danger of different people involved in any research, ‘talking about different things under the same title heading’ (p365). Strauss and Corbin (1998) echo this concern by explaining how invalidation of possible meanings of concepts would result in the limitation of the development of theory. According to them, the researcher must be trained to consider the different meanings that respondents might attribute to salient terms; terms that are potentially ambiguous or susceptible to a variety of interpretations. With this in mind, consideration was given to the central and it could be argued potentially nebulous concepts of ‘faith development’ and of ‘needs’.

3.2.1 ‘Faith Development needs’

Faith, according to Fowler (1995), is a response to a superior or transcendent power as understood through the forms of a ‘cumulative tradition’. Faith grows and develops through its interaction with the cumulative tradition—otherwise known as ‘religion’—to which the person has committed himself or herself. In explaining this concept further, Fowler uses Wilfred Cantwell Smith’s works on the subject (1977 & 1979), which claims that faith involves ‘an alignment of the heart or will’ in addition to a commitment of ‘loyalty and trust’ (Fowler 1995:11). Fowler continues, ‘to set one’s heart on someone or something requires that one has ‘seen’ or ‘sees the point of that to which one is loyal.’ Therefore, according to Fowler and Smith, faith involves a commitment to what is already known or acknowledged and ‘lives loyally, with life and character being shaped by that commitment’ (Smith 1979:61). It is a total response, a way of living where someone sees, feels and acts in terms of a dimension that is transcendent.

The term ‘development’ implies change and within the context of this research ‘faith development’ was taken to mean the changing nature and maturation of ‘man’s [sic] response to God... as he searches for the ultimate meaning of his life’ (CCC, 1994: para 26). Faith development is not considered by the Catholic Church to be simply an intellectual or rational response to God, but rather a whole life response where it affects what someone thinks, says, feels and does—it is the growth of an orientation of the whole person towards God.

Throughout this study the word ‘faith’ appears many times and has a number of different meanings. It is used by participants to refer to the Roman Catholic tradition; that is, describing a belonging or attachment to ‘*the Catholic Faith*’ or describing their ‘*faith background*’; both referring to a system of religious belief. It is also used in the context of people having, for example, ‘*great faith*’ which is taken to mean the observance of someone’s obligation or loyalty to the Roman Catholic tradition and its teachings. ‘*Faith development*’, however, is as described above: participants’ ongoing response to God as they search for the ultimate meaning of their lives.

Within the context of ‘faith development needs’, the word ‘*needs*’ then refers to what is *required* or *wanted* in order for a response to God to be developed further. Therefore the ‘*faith development needs of the Catholic teacher*’ is what is required or wanted by a teacher in order for their holistic orientation towards God to grow, as they search for the ultimate meaning of their lives, as they continue in their role as educator.

The next section describes the design of the study and includes details of the framework adopted and operation of this; the location of the study and the ethical issues that were taken into consideration.

3.3 Design of Study

There exist two main paradigms for conducting research most commonly known as *qualitative* and *quantitative* approaches, and both containing numerous strategies of inquiry for use by investigators. The benefits of either continue to be debated and although there are aspects of both which can sometimes encroach on the other’s paradigm, they are usually considered as opposite ends of a spectrum.

Creswell (2003) refers to a quantitative approach as,

‘one in which the investigator primarily uses postpositivist claims for developing knowledge (ie., cause and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables and hypotheses and questions, use of measurement and

observation, and the test of theories), employs strategies of enquiries such as experiments and surveys, and collects data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data' (p18).

Thus there is always a theoretical base for whatever is being studied, an existing historical precedent for viewing theory as a 'scientific prediction or explanation' (ibid: 120). This paradigm differs significantly from the qualitative one in that it is shaped by particular assumptions that are epistemological and ontological. The qualitative approach does not emphasise a theoretical base for the study nor does it use a mathematical process of interpretation of data. Rather, it analyses the data for the purpose of discovering concepts and relationships and organises these into a layout that is 'theoretically explanatory' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998: 11). For this kind of study the data are referred to as 'soft' since they are rich in description of people, places and conversations, and are not easily interpreted by statistical methods (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Within the qualitative approach, theory can be allowed to develop, based on the analysis of data, and is subject to change or refinement as the research continues. Theory that develops in this way emerges from the bottom up as opposed to a top down model since the theory is grounded in the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007: 6).

It is argued that qualitative research, in its purest sense,

'follows the naturalist paradigm, that research should be constructed in the natural setting and that the meanings derived from research are specific to that setting and its conditions. The approach is that of a holistic interpretation of the natural setting' (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005:13)

and is;

'research about persons' lives, lived experiences, behaviours, emotions and feelings as well as about cultural phenomena and interactions between nation' (Strauss & Corbin 1998: 11).

This particular study is situated within the qualitative paradigm.

There is much debate about the value and validity of the different research approaches. Champions of quantitative (or positivist) research would argue that, only things that are observable and measurable can be regarded as knowledge

and they question qualitative research's validity due to a lack of measurement in favour of a focus on feelings, behaviours and experiences. On the other hand, qualitative researchers have trouble being convinced by quantitative researchers' presentation of statistics as the results of surveys and tests to convey reality. In the field of education they claim that decisions affecting change and courses of action cannot be based upon scientific explanations of educational situations (Carr & Kemmis, 1986: 76). They challenge this approach by elevating the importance of a focus on *meaning* rather than on measurement and explain that investigating a reality can actually have an impact on that reality. The phenomenon under investigation in this study is the faith development of Catholic teachers. The reality is the experience of the teacher and how they choose to interpret and articulate that experience.

Bogdan & Biklen (2007) stress that the term *qualitative research* is often used to refer to a variety of research strategies that all share similar characteristics. They explain that the term is sometimes used synonymously with other terms such as, *fieldwork*; *ethnographic research*; *phenomenological research*; *naturalistic research* and while this can be confusing since these terms can often have very exact meanings, the strategies used in all come under the '*qualitative research*' umbrella. They claim that there are five distinguishing characteristics of qualitative research, and as it happens, all were key features of this particular study. What follows is a very brief consideration of each but they will be developed further as this chapter progresses:

1. Naturalistic - 'qualitative researchers assume that human behaviour is significantly influenced by the setting in which it occurs and whenever possible they go to that location' (ibid:5).

During this study the researcher strove to conduct all interviews with participants in their natural educational surroundings. This was considered important since it was believed that divorcing what was being said from its context could have resulted in a loss of significance.

2. Descriptive data – ‘The data collected take the form of words or pictures rather than numbers.... [qualitative researchers] try to analyse the data with all of their richness as closely as possible to the form in which they were recorded’ (ibid: 5).

In this particular study the data was analysed with the assumption that nothing was trivial or should be taken for granted, and that every word had the potential for being used to gain a deeper understanding of what was being studied.

3. Concern with process – ‘Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or products’ (ibid: 6).

As this thesis will convey, process was an integral part of the study. The questions that participants were asked explored how things came to be rather than what they simply were.

4. Inductive - ‘Qualitative researchers ...do not search out data or evidence to prove or disprove hypotheses they hold before entering the study; rather, the abstractions are built as the particulars that have been gathered are grouped together’ (ibid: 6).

A grounded theory approach to the study was implemented (Strauss & Corbin 1998), an approach which relies on the data to produce theory. As the theory emerged a picture was slowly constructed and the different rounds of data collection—and analysis of it—affected the way the picture looked.

5. Meaning – ‘Qualitative researchers are concerned with making sure that they capture perspectives accurately’ (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007:8).

Throughout this study the researcher focussed on the participants’ perspectives and how they made sense of their own faith—and the development of this—within the context of the school. The concern was with trying to capture, as accurately as possible, the participants’ own interpretations of events and then these were used to develop theory.

3.3.1 Framework for the study

The qualitative research strategy adopted during this particular study was that of *grounded theory*, where the researcher used methods which allowed theory to emerge from the data. Charmaz (2005) recognises that a strength of such an approach is that, among other things, it encourages researchers to remain close to the phenomenon that they are studying. She explains that adopting a grounded theory approach uses a framework or guidelines that enables ‘researchers to focus their data collection and to build inductive middle-range theories through successive levels of data analysis and conceptual development’ (p507).

The data for this study was collected over a four-year period and the analysis of this was an ongoing process, therefore an appropriate framework for the study had to be considered in order to maximise the full potential of this particular strategy. The framework was required ultimately to facilitate answering the research question and therefore needed to be sympathetic to a grounded theory approach, where concepts were emerging and developing and new questions were being asked. A cyclical framework was considered best to support this process—a framework involving four major activities: *planning*, *acting*, *observing* and *reflecting* (Dearnley, 2002). This allowed for an inductive approach and for the research to be responsive to its own findings in that it could look back for justification for the next steps. The framework in Table 1:1 illustrates the seven stages involved in the process.

Table 1:1 Framework for the Study.

Pilot Stage	Data Collection and Analysis Stage 1	Data Collection and Analysis Stage 2	Data Collection and Analysis Stage 3	Data Collection and Analysis Stage 4	Data Collection and Analysis Stage 5	Data Collection and Analysis Stage 6
<i>Action:</i> Conduct Pilot Study – (Twelve Scottish head teachers)	<i>Action:</i> Collect data: interviews in Scotland. Transcribe and analyse data	<i>Action:</i> Collect data: interviews in Scotland. Transcribe and analyse data	<i>Action:</i> Collect data: interviews in Scotland. Transcribe and analyse data	<i>Action:</i> Collect data: interviews in Scotland. Transcribe and analyse data	<i>Action:</i> Collect data: interviews in NSW, Australia. Transcribe and analyse data	<i>Action:</i> Collect data: interviews with Church representatives. Transcribe and analyse data
<i>Reflect:</i> On the process, the outcomes and implications	<i>Reflect:</i> On the findings and their implications	<i>Reflect:</i> On the findings and their implications	<i>Reflect:</i> On the findings and their implications	<i>Reflect:</i> On the findings and their implications	<i>Reflect:</i> On the findings and their implications	<i>Reflect:</i> On the findings and their implications
<i>Observe:</i> Review the literature	<i>Observe:</i> Category development / review literature	<i>Observe:</i> Category development / review literature	<i>Observe:</i> Category development / review literature	<i>Observe:</i> Category development / review literature	<i>Observe:</i> Category development / review literature	<i>Observe:</i> Category development / review literature
<i>Plan:</i> The next stage	<i>Plan:</i> The next stage	<i>Plan:</i> The next stage	<i>Plan:</i> The next stage including comparative stage	<i>Plan:</i> The comparative stage	<i>Plan:</i> The next stage	<i>Plan:</i> Writing a thesis which accurately represents the experiences of the participants and researcher

The framework illustrates that planning took place at each stage after the activities of acting, reflecting and observing. This set of activities guided the progression of the study to the next stage of investigation. At each stage the data collection involved conducting interviews. The interviews were then transcribed and coded (Stauss & Corbin, 1998), categories and concepts emerged and these were reflected upon and refined. Literature pertinent to the current findings was considered and both this and the development of the categories and concepts, informed the planning for the next stage of the investigation.

3.3.2 Reflection

As the framework clearly illustrates, an integral aspect of this methodology was reflection – both on the *theory* that was emerging as well as on the *research practice* of the investigator.

An important aspect of the cyclical nature of the research framework, which can be seen in *Table 1.1*, was that of ‘action’. For this particular study, a repeated ‘action’ that took place was the conducting of semi-structured interviews - this appeared at each stage of the framework and was central to the direction of the study. During the different stages reflection on the interviewing technique took place where the researcher constantly reviewed her skills in this area, in an attempt to develop them further. Inevitably the interviewing technique improved as the research progressed; the pilot study stage was of particular value in starting this reflection process, which took place prior to embarking on the main component of the research. Analysing the data allowed for reflection on this ‘action’, where the interviewing technique could be assessed in detail. However, another key aspect of reflection was the consideration of what actually happened and was said during the interviews, and what concepts were emerging. Reflecting on these contributed to informing the next stage of action. During the analysis of the data, memos were written to record such reflections and were crucial in directing the future stages of the study. They highlighted concerns, questions, areas requiring additional attention, new ideas and so on. These memos have been considered a key resource in the investigation and are absorbed into this final presentation of the research. Strauss & Corbin (1998) explain that a memo is, ‘the researcher’s record of analysis, thoughts,

interpretations, questions, and directions for further data collection' (p110). What follows are a few examples of the memos that recorded the researcher's reflections:

- **A note to pursue an idea during the stage of interviews.**

Example from the study: This school provides many opportunities for staff to come together with pupils and pray. Although she did say that she has not been aware of formal CPD opportunities to develop faith, the activities in the school related to faith contribute to her own development: team, community, strong supportive RE dept, mass together. Quite a number of others have commented on the EXAMPLE of the head or members of the SMT and how this alone has encouraged development in faith in RESPONSE to this example of others. This is worth investigating further, this whole idea of culture and example/witness of others in the school having an impact on faith.

- **Questions about some comments from head teachers.**

Example from the study: This would link with the suggestion in R1a - 10/11/03 Code Note1 that teachers are more professional in that they are more discerning about the quality of the CPD course. Is this the case? If so, is it because of the demand (McCrone) placed on them to engage in CPD? Is it because now that there is a requirement to engage in formal CPD that teachers have become more discerning and expect value for money? Why should teachers accept CPD courses that fail to do what they propose to do, especially now that there are high CPD expectations of staff? Look into this further.

- **An emerging hypothesis having reflected on participants' comments.**

Example from the study: Is the activity of teaching RE developing faith? Some teachers are not directly involved in the teaching of RE and so don't feel that their own faith is being 'tapped' into as much as if they were. This sits comfortably with those teaching in the primary sector and who are responsible for the teaching of RE – some have mentioned a

development in their own faith due to preparing and implementation of these lessons.

Reflection, therefore, was a significant aspect of the work of this study and often directed the work and contributed to the outcomes of the analysis.

3.3.3 Location

This study was conducted in a variety of different locations but common to them all was the natural environment of the participants. Miles & Huberman (1994) believe that this strengthens the data since, ‘they focus on naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings, so that we have a strong handle on what ‘real life’ is like’ (p10). The school leaders and Church representatives participating in the study were interviewed in their offices. The teachers in Scotland (who were the main focus of this study) were interviewed on four occasions over a three-year period with the initial interview being conducted while they were student teachers in their final year of study. During this stage they were interviewed on the university campus, the environment where they were completing their initial teacher education (ITE) qualification - the campus where the researcher worked. With two exceptions, the remaining interviews (those taking place after participants’ graduations) were conducted in the participants’ own classroom or school environments. Those interviewed in New South Wales, Australia were, for the most part, interviewed in their student/work environment but for a small minority, the participants suggested that the interview would be conducted outside of the school environment for fear of not being able to speak openly and freely. It is worth noting that the university establishments in both Glasgow and Sydney gave permission for interviews to be conducted with the participating students and on campus (Appendix 1).

The decision to collect data within the location where the researcher worked was one that was well considered, however, given that Glasgow University is the only Higher Education establishment in the country that offers the Catholic Teachers’ Certificate and is the University to which most students wanting to

teach in the Catholic sector in Scotland attend, it was accepted that this location was appropriate for this particular study. Ultimately, engaging with those who were wishing to embark on a career in Catholic education was necessary, so choosing the University of Glasgow as an initial base, was considered the right choice. It is worth mentioning at this stage (and the section on Data Collection will explain their selection and involvement in more detail) that the participants who were students at the university, and some of whom were taught and examined directly by the researcher, were all in the final month of their ITE courses and the researcher had no longer any involvement in their assessments.

It is accepted that by using some of the researcher's own students in the study, that this may be perceived by an external audience as increasing any element of bias. However, the recognition of this potential limitation, in addition to continuous reflection on the data collection process, has resulted in the researcher paying particular attention to the transparency of the study and she believes that the presentation of the thesis conveys this.

3.3.4 Collaboration and consultation

Engaging in academic conversation and sharing findings with colleagues, interested parties and other researchers was a valuable inclusion at a variety of different stages throughout the study process. Strauss (1987) recommends that, 'seminars can give presenters confidence in their analyses, whether in preliminary or almost final form, as well as confidence in the analyses embodied in their writing' (p259). The Graduate School within the Faculty of Education where the researcher worked provided a platform to meet and discuss progress with peers, and the findings of the pilot stage of the study were presented in a formal seminar early in 2005. The research seminar series, hosted by the Department of Religious Education, also provided opportunities to meet with and speak informally to invited guests from the field of Religious Education about ongoing work from the study. The opinions of others, the exchange of ideas and discussion of findings helped build the researcher's confidence and strengthened, she believes, the validation of the results.

At a more formal level, three academic papers were written as the study progressed, all of which were submitted to internationally peer-reviewed journals, where they were subjected to interrogation by a number of experienced colleagues within the field of education. All were accepted for publication and all have appeared in print (Coll, 2006: Coll, 2007a; Coll, 2007b). The opportunity to do this boosted the researcher's confidence in her writing and research ability (Strauss, 1987). In addition, her findings were presented at the annual Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET) Conference in November 2007. Both activities allowed for additional feedback, suggestions for refining her work and for completing the thesis.

The comments, suggestions and support from others have been reflected upon and considered. They allowed the researcher to step back from her work and see it from other researchers' perspectives - a valuable inclusion in the whole methodological process.

3.3.5 Ethical considerations.

'Naiveté [about ethics] itself is unethical' (Seashore (1982:100) *in* Miles & Huberman, 1994:288). As with any research study of this nature, it was imperative that this investigation was subjected to a number of moral and ethical questions prior to and during its process. A comprehensive application was submitted to and approved by the University of Glasgow's Faculty of Education Ethics Committee, a committee charged with the responsibility of considering the ethical issues involved in a research study and authorising it to proceed. The decision it makes is guided by general principles of ethical research, as well as considering the codes of ethical conduct of a variety of Research Councils and Associations Committees

(www.gla.ac.uk/faculties/education/research/ethics/informationforapplicants/).

There existed the requirement for transparent information regarding consent of participants, ethics surrounding data collection (including interview schedules) and the dissemination of results and, in responding to these requirements, the following areas were considered. (The section on Data Collection will detail how

participants were selected and the strategies involved in gaining information. What follows here is an explanation of measures that were taken with regard only to the *ethical* concerns.)

3.3.5.1 Informed consent

Punch (1994:90 *in* Christians, 2005:144) argues that there is a predicament for qualitative researchers regarding informed consent in that, ‘divulging one’s identity and research purpose to all and sundry will kill many a project stone dead’. Regardless, the researcher believed strongly in the moral and ethical obligation to observe this procedure and did not consider it to be detrimental to the data collection process. It was important to establish that those willing to be a part of the study had freely given their consent, ‘fully, voluntarily and uncoerced’ (Miles & Huberman, 1994:291). Clear information was given to participants regarding the nature and purpose of this study. Prior to the interview stages, all participants were asked to sign a consent form in addition to a plain language statement that outlined exactly what the study proposed to do and how the individuals would be involved (Appendix 2). They stressed that those willing to be a part of the study could withdraw consent or any data supplied at any time. They conveyed the necessary procedures to take if participants had any concerns about the conduct of the study. It was made clear that dissemination of the results of the study would be presented in a thesis and may appear in academic journals or other publications. Both the consent form and the plain language statement were considered by the Ethics Committee to be appropriate for use.

Eisner (1991) has argued that it is impossible in qualitative studies to gain truly informed consent since certain developments in such evolutionary research cannot be anticipated from the outset. However, for this study, it was not expected that the main area of focus would shift as it progressed, and the consent form and plain language statement were as accurate and as transparent as possible at the time that participants were asked to sign them. Related to this was the issue of submitting the interview schedules for the committee to approve prior to embarking on this study. This again was impossible due to the nature of

the research and of the fact that the interview questions would evolve after the reflection action at each stage of the process. It was deemed acceptable to submit the interview schedule for the first stage of the interview process.

Consent was considered of great importance by the researcher, not only for satisfying ethical queries, but for establishing and honest an open relationship with participants - something that was valued as highly as consent itself. Miles & Huberman (1994) argue that, 'weak consent usually leads to poorer data' since, 'respondents will try to protect themselves in a mistrusted relationship' (p291).

One issue, often affecting the consent of individuals engaged in such research activity, is that of confidentiality. This will now be discussed.

3.3.5.2 Anonymity and confidentiality

Anonymity was agreed with every participant in the study with the exception of two. While the names of these two individuals will not be used in this thesis, identifying them may be straightforward for those familiar with the Scottish education system due to their unique positions of office within Scottish Catholic Education. As Christians (2005) observes, 'pseudonyms and disguised locations often are recognised by insiders. What researchers consider innocent [can be] perceived by participants as misleading or even betrayal' (p145). Both participants were aware of their easily identifiable profiles and have accepted and agreed to this limited anonymity. The remaining forty-six interviewees' identities and research locations were protected by the use of pseudonyms, and participants were aware of and agreed to this from the outset. The measures taken for this confidentiality were to safeguard against unwanted exposure, which could potentially harm any of the subjects. Christians (2005) claims that in any social science enquiry, exposure is the single most likely cause of harm to participants and that no one deserves this. Indeed, the researcher was well aware of the implications of this and of the effect that lack of anonymity could have on the reliability of the data being collected.

3.3.5.3 Honesty and trust

House (1990 *in* Miles & Huberman 1994: 290) suggests basic ethical principles when planning qualitative research, the first of which is ensuring that ‘mutual respect’ should exist, where the researcher pays particular attention not to damage participants’ self esteem or adopt a condescending disposition. ‘Non-coercion and non-manipulation’ is another of these principles where participants should be invited in a non-threatening manner to respond to or cooperate with the researcher. Fontana & Frey (2005) stress that if we want to learn about people, we should *treat* them as people rather than ‘faceless individuals’, and this may result in them working with us to generate accounts of their experiences (p722). The digital recordings and transcripts of the interviews conducted for this study provide evidence that both principles were adhered to with the utmost care, resulting in individuals responding and participating in an atmosphere of partnership and trust. In addition, the researcher was committed to ensuring that honesty prevailed for the duration of this study, where no participant could claim to have been deceived or misled. The researcher’s interpretations of the data have been based on what was asked and what was said and at no time was there a hidden agenda involved in this study. Christians (1994) states that ‘opposing deception’ is one of the main moral principles of any social science code of ethics and that any deliberate misrepresentation of data is forbidden. This study demonstrates a commitment to that principle.

3.3.6 Use of literature in the study.

In many research presentations, a review of relevant literature is introduced at an early stage as an orienting framework and context for the work. However, if a grounded theory strategy has been adopted, as is the case for this investigation, ‘literature will serve less to set the stage for the study’ (Creswell, 2003: 30). This research was inductive and as can be observed from the framework, throughout its progression literature was referred to and reviewed to clarify or support emerging concepts and theories. Essentially this meant that the concepts and theories emerged from the data rather than from the literature. For this

reason the bulk of the literature related to this study is evident towards the end of this thesis, when the results are reflected upon. It is used to compare and contrast with these results as they emerge from the study and serve as a secondary source of data and as a tool for validation.

It is recognised, however, that the researcher brings with her a considerable amount of knowledge in this particular field of enquiry to the research, and much of this will be as a result of literature read in the past. Strauss and Corbin (1998) warn that creativity could be stifled if this prior knowledge is allowed to dominate. They also point out that the important concepts of a study are not known prior to the start of any grounded theory research and so referring to the literature at an earlier stage would not be fruitful.

3.3.7 The role of the researcher

This chapter has already addressed the important area of *location*, in explaining where the data collection took place. However, the researcher recognised that even though participants were interviewed in their own environment—as an attempt to ensure that the data was collected in as natural and comfortable surroundings as possible—the issue of ‘observer effect’ did not disappear. As Bogdan & Biklen (2007) describe, this is the effect that the researcher has on participants by simply conducting the study. For example, it is argued that inviting someone to complete a questionnaire will change their behaviour in that they might adopt an opinion about something that they had never really considered before. Therefore measures were taken to minimise this effect during the interviewing stages by trying not to make participants feel like ‘research subjects’. The interviews will provide evidence that participants were encouraged to talk freely and openly in their natural environment and the researcher tried to ensure that she not was controlling the situation too tightly.

Another issue that requires attention and discussion at this stage is that of subjectivity or bias. Researchers come from a variety of different backgrounds and their interests are diverse. It is argued that two people conducting similar

studies may produce quite different theories or results based on their background in training or their particular area of expertise (for example, psychology, sociology and so on) due to the effect that this will have on the phenomenon studied. The investigation would be shaped by their inherent theoretical perspectives and so different types of data would be collected and different conclusions may be reached (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). While both studies can be considered reliable, it would be advantageous for the researchers to inform readers of their starting positions to add to the contextualisation of the investigation. Therefore, at this stage in the presentation of this particular study, it is important for the researcher to expose her personal background and address the issues of subjectivity and bias.

In qualitative research it is recognised that data ‘goes through’ the researcher’s mind prior to presenting results, and this raises questions about that effect that personal convictions might have on the results that are produced. Bogdan & Biklen (2007) argue that good research design can help with this predicament:

‘Qualitative studies are not impressionistic essays made after a quick visit to a setting or after some conversation with a few subjects. The researcher spends a considerable time in the empirical world laboriously collecting and reviewing piles of data.....Additionally, the researcher’s primary aim is to add knowledge, not to pass judgement on a setting’ (p37-38).

Throughout the study, the researcher was very aware of her position and the implications of subjectivity, and strove to minimise the affect that this had on her work. The act of keeping detailed memos that included continued reflection on the data, and her own interpretation of it, helped confront the issues of subjectivity and bias. However, it was also acknowledged that, ‘no matter how much you try, you cannot divorce your research and writing from your past experiences, who you are, what you believe, and what you value’ (ibid: 38). Others (Nisbett & Ross (1980) and Miles & Huberman (1994)) echo this by stressing that all research is based upon a relationship between the investigator and the researched, and that individual preconceptions will always affect the results of the work. Therefore the advice was to embrace this and not allow it to

immobilise the work by becoming so concerned with it (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The aim then was not to eliminate it, but to reflect on, and be more aware of how personal features may shape the process.

The researcher's personal background will now be made explicit.

3.3.7.1 Personal background

For the purpose of this section it is important to introduce the researcher—who is also the writer—and so will be referred to in the first person.

As already mentioned, it is recognised that my biography may bias some of the claims of this investigation therefore presentation of my own background and culture is essential so that readers can place this study within an appropriate context.

I am single female, of Caucasian origin and come from a Western industrialised culture. I was born and brought up in a predominately Catholic town in the West of Scotland by practising Catholic parents, one of whom is Irish and the other, first generation Irish. I am a practising Catholic and have three siblings, all of whom practise their faith. While the assumptions I make in this study are grounded on experience and reflection on relevant literature, I recognise that they represent *my* perspectives on what is taking place and my biases and subjectivity, based on my historical narrative, will affect that.

In addition, it is essential to acknowledge that there are many similarities between the participants and myself as researcher. My biography resembles that of many of the students in Scotland who were interviewed and tracked over the three-year period. Most are from the same geographical location (the West of Scotland), have similar cultural backgrounds and, like me, completed their ITE programme at the only institution in Scotland that awards the Catholic Teachers'

Certificate. I am a qualified Catholic teacher who has undergone the same instruction and experienced the same processes in order to gain entry to the teaching profession. (Indeed, in some cases, the participants' tutors were the same people who taught me.) For seven years I taught in a Catholic primary school and for the last eight years I have been a full time member of the academic staff in the Faculty of Education at the University of Glasgow, five of those as a lecturer in the Religious Education department. Amongst my responsibilities, I am directly involved in the delivery of the Religious Education component of two of the initial teacher education programmes.

Having shared many of the participants' experiences and being acutely aware of the Religious Education dimension of their programmes of study, this allowed for increased awareness, comprehension and discernment as the research progressed.

3.4 Data collection methods

The semi-structured interview was chosen to be the primary data collection tool for this study. It is a tool that enables a researcher to probe further, follow up ideas and return to points if necessary. Unlike those for a questionnaire, interview responses from participants need not be taken at face value and have the opportunity to be developed or clarified (Bell, 2005). It is recognised, however, that the interview is not a *neutral* tool since it involves two people, each coming from historical and political contexts and bringing with them (sometimes unconsciously) motives, biases and emotions. In addition, it is a tool that if used incorrectly or without appropriate planning and preparation, or careful consideration given to the surrounding conditions, it can produce second-rate and unreliable data. Regardless, the pitfalls of such a tool were outweighed by its considerable benefits and, ultimately, the semi-structured interview was adopted since it is commonly regarded as a tool that is designed for the purpose of improving knowledge (Wengraf, 2001).

3.4.1 Participant selection and theoretical sampling

The framework adopted for this study promoted a flexible theoretical approach to sampling, in terms of what was investigated, owing to its evolving nature and focus on emerging theory. Strauss and Corbin (1998) explain that theoretical sampling, ‘rather than being predetermined before beginning the research, evolves during the process’ (p202). It is cumulative in that it extends and strengthens previous data collection and analysis (ibid:203). However, it was recognised that setting boundaries from the outset, in order to define the study, was required since it was important to consider who was to be interviewed and why, where, when and about what. As Miles and Huberman, (1994) stress, a researcher cannot study ‘everyone, everywhere doing everything’ (p27). Setting boundaries allowed the researcher to determine what could be studied within the limits of her time and means (ibid:27).

Throughout this study, a total of one hundred and six semi-structured interviews were conducted during a four-year data collection period involving fifty-three participants. There were four different categories of participants and these can be viewed in *Table 1.2*. It was considered important to ensure that multiple viewpoints were being voiced. Wengraf (2001) explains that gaining different perspectives on the phenomenon under investigation is valuable and is good research practice, since one set of participants will consider information relevant that another group may not. This then allows for analysis and ‘synthesizing’ and can be considered a form of ‘triangulation’ (Wengraf, 2001:105).

Table 1.2: Categories of participants

Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 4
6 individual Catholic school leaders and one focus group of six head teachers. (Scotland) (<i>Pilot Study</i>)	26 Catholic student teachers (Scotland) (<i>Focus Category</i>)	13 Catholic student/qualified teachers (New South Wales) (<i>Comparative dimension</i>)	2 Catholic education representatives (Scotland)
Interviewed once	Interviewed 4 times	Interviewed once	Interviewed once

When selecting participants for this study, purposive, criterion sampling (Patton, 1990) took place, meaning subjects were selected on the basis of a number of characteristics. What follows is a brief outline of how participants were recruited and the criteria they had to fulfil.

Category 1 (*Pilot Study*)

Criteria: All participants had to be;

1. a head teacher or depute in a Catholic school in Scotland
2. responsible for the school's CPD programme.

Recruitment: A letter was sent to ten Catholic head teachers (both Catholic primary and secondary schools) in the central belt of Scotland, asking if they would participate in the research. The nature of the research was explicit in the letter (Appendix 3). There were six replies: four were male and two female. Three belonged to the primary sector and three to the secondary sector. All six became participants. In addition, the researcher was invited to one of the participant's cluster group meetings and was given time to speak to six additional head teachers collectively. The cluster group consisted of one secondary school head teacher and the head teachers of all the associated primary schools. The researcher interviewed these teachers together in a focus group situation.

All of these interviews took place at the *pilot stage* of the framework.

Category 2 (*Focus group*)

Criteria: All participants had to;

1. be Roman Catholic
2. be in their final year of study
3. be studying for their Catholic Teachers' Certificate

Recruitment: Students in their final year of study from three different ITE courses (Bachelor of Education (Honours); Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (Primary) and Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (Secondary)) were invited to become participants in the study via an invitation from their Religious Education tutors. The information that tutors had, stated that the research would be conducted over a three-year period and was concerned with the Continuing Professional Development of the Catholic teacher. Willing students submitted their email addresses and the researcher contacted them directly to give exact details of the study and invite them for a meeting to discuss this further. Twenty-six agreed to participate and be re-interviewed over a three year period, as they moved from student teacher, to newly qualified teacher and finally to fully qualified teacher. Twenty of these were female and six male. Fourteen were training for a career in the primary sector and twelve for a career in the secondary. Of the twenty-six that participated at the beginning of the study, eighteen were still there at the end (see *Table 1.3*). These interviews took place at *stages 1,2,3 and 4* of the framework.

Category 3 (*Comparative dimension*)

Criteria: All participants had to;

1. be Roman Catholic
2. be in their final year of study/ or in their first two years of teaching
3. be studying for or have gained their Catholic Teachers' Qualification

Recruitment: A link was established with a Religious Education lecturer at one of the Australian Catholic University campuses in Sydney, New South Wales. He expressed willingness to help set up interviews with four student teachers, four newly qualified teachers and four teachers in their second year of teaching. This was done prior to the researcher arriving in Australia. He was given the

criteria and contacted students and former students to invite them to participate. Fifteen interviews were arranged and thirteen of these took place. Seven participants were female and six male. Seven were training for, or teaching in, the secondary sector and six in the primary (see *Table 1.4*). These interviews took place at *stage 5* of the framework.

Category 4

Criteria: All participants had to;

1. be in a position of authority within Catholic education in Scotland.

Recruitment: Both the Director of the Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES) and the chair of the Catholic Education Commission (CEC) in Scotland, who is also a Bishop, agreed to be interviewed. These interviews took place at *stage 6* of the framework.

Typically, the interviews lasted between thirty minutes to an hour. They were digitally recorded and transcribed professionally. Participants had the opportunity to receive copies of their transcript(s) but this offer was only taken up on one occasion.

Table 1.3: Scottish Catholic teacher participant matrix ('' denotes when interviewed)*

Participants	Primary /Secondary trained	As a student teacher	As a newly qualified teacher (1)	As a newly qualified teacher (2)	As a fully qualified teacher
Patricia	P	*	*	*	*
Joseph	P	*	*	*	*
Siobhan	P	*	*	Withdrew	
Laura	P	*	*	*	*
Helen	P	*	*	*	*
Julie	P	*	*	*	*
Francesca	P	*	*	*	*
Patrick	P	*	*	*	*
Marie	S	*	*	*	*
Emma	S	*	*	*	*
Paul	P	*	*	*	*
Andrew	S	*	*	*	*
Leona	S	*	*	*	Withdrew
Maura	S	*	Serious health problems resulting in career break.	Serious health problems resulting in career break.	Serious health problems resulting in career break.
Theresa	P	*	Withdrew		
Diane	P	*	*	*	*
Pauline	P	*	*	*	*
Denise	P	*	*	*	*
Ed	P	*	*	*	*
Mary	S	*	*	*	*
Katie	S	*	Withdrew		
Sarah	S	*	*	*	Withdrew

Participants	Primary /Secondary trained	As a student teacher	As a newly qualified teacher (1)	As a newly qualified teacher (2)	As a fully qualified teacher
Christine	S	*	Withdrew		
Gemma	S	*	*	*	*
Brenda	S	*	*	*	*
Eileen	S	*	*	*	*

Table 1.3 (Continued)

Table 1.4: New South Wales Catholic teacher participant matrix (' denotes when interviewed)*

Participants	Primary/secondary trained	Student teacher	Newly qualified teacher	Fully qualified teacher
Mike	S	*		
Neil	S	*		
Frances	P	*		
Elle	P	*		
Louise	S	*		
Mandy	S		*	
Cath	S		*	
Mags	P		*	
Steve	S		*	
Hugh	P			*
Drew	S			*
Caroline	P			*
Vince	P			*

3.4.2 Interview techniques

In the atmosphere of trust and respect previously highlighted, the researcher's aim was to maintain a balance between formally questioning the participants and achieving a conversational mode. A number of planned open questions were asked and these initiated responses that were probed further, allowing concepts to emerge. For example, for the Scottish teachers who were interviewed, one such question was: *'Tell me about the professional development opportunities you've had since we last met'*; and then: *'what about formal or informal faith development opportunities?'* and depending on how this was answered, *'Can you give me a bit more detail about what your head teacher does during this assembly that you mentioned, and the prayer that takes place?'* Quite often then, the participants' responses directed and guided the interview. The following passage further demonstrates this interviewing technique:

Mary: *The first thing is that I wasn't sure whether I wanted to teach in the Catholic school. I really wasn't at the start of this and you know in fact there were things about it that really put me off and I thought I think I'll steer clear.*

Roisin: *Can you tell me more about that?*

Mary: *Ah hm. Well I was thinking well that my own faith had just kinda dwindled away really and at that point I thought well I don't want to go into that you know some sort of an ethos for people that are very religious and I feel outta that then or feel under pressure to take more part in it.*

Roisin: *When you say 'dwindled away' do you mean in terms of your own attendance at mass and things like that?*

Mary: *Everything. So it has made me think again. Actually the opposite happened. I just felt very included when I came in and there was no pressure on me as a teacher you know.*

Roisin: *None?*

Mary: *No no. I have chosen to become involved in the kind of spiritual life in the school. You know by helping out if there are retreats or I've approached, I've gone and sat in the RE classes just to see what goes on because.*

Roisin: *What influenced that choice then?*

Mary: *Well I mean I'm just thinking about CPD you know but also I'm just curious as to what goes on within RE classes. Also at the time were I was asked to do that I was doing work on the Uganda Project and so they were also doing that in RE. First they were doing it in RE and I asked if I could go and just sit in the to see what angle they took on it obviously it must be quite different from English you know. Although there were some eh common features as well. Em what did you ask again?*

Roisín: *Just about how you, you were saying that your faith prior to coming here, you weren't sure if you wanted to teach in a Catholic school but now that you have you felt included.*

Mary: *Well that has actually changed me and I think it definitely has changed my faith. You know I think I grew up with feeling that eh feeling a guilt that if I wasn't really practising. Now its just a feeling that if I go to mass its because I want to be there. That's really liberating for me. And that I actually really love that ethos within the school. And I do feel that it has a major impact on me and then on the pupils.*

Another technique that was adopted by the researcher was, on occasion, to 'summarise' what the participant had said to ensure that she had grasped and understood the intention:

Laura: *I just feel as though no because you're not even encouraged. Like last year even when you were kind of sitting listening to the head teacher and he was really, you know he was really reverent he knew, you know he knew what he was talking about so you knew he would maybe teach you a wee bit actually em but no.*

Roisín: *So last year, so I'm getting from you, last year even from the way in which the Head teacher spoke to the children, the teachers learned from it?*

Laura: *Yeah the teachers were learning you know he was making things kind of that you could understand em because some parts of you know kind of you know the religion you don't understand as such when the priest's kind of talking and you're just like whatever you know but he really brought it down to a level where the children understood therefore the teachers did too.*

For those teachers in the primary sector both in Scotland and NSW, the interviews took place, for the most part, at the end of the school day and in their classrooms. For those in the secondary school, free periods were designated by participants as opportunities to conduct the interviews. Since many of the participants moved from school to school it was decided that they should seek permission from their head teacher for the interview to take place in the school. At no point did this present a problem.

3.5 Data analysis

A constant comparative method of data analysis was adopted for the duration of this study in an attempt to improve the credibility of findings, which have been recognised as the result of subjective interpretation. It cannot be claimed that this diminished the subjectivity to vanishing point, but the manner with which data analysis converged has arguably strengthened the validity of the results.

3.5.1 Coding

Strauss and Corbin's (1998) method of data analysis for grounded theory was adopted for this study. Open and axial coding took place on the transcripts where the researcher conducted a detailed line-by-line analysis of the text in order to generate concepts. As she did this she was constantly conceptualising and recorded this by labelling any concepts and their properties while creating memos to reflect on these. This was done by herself rather than by using any software since the researcher felt that even though it may be more time consuming, she would have a fuller grasp and understanding of the data and of the concepts emerging. This is an example of the open coding process that took place during one of the pilot study interviews:

*There definitely is a need (**REQUIREMENT**) for CPD and I think that is because of the pace of change just now, (**change**) it is really rapid and I think we have to be prepared for meeting challenges for the future (**challenges**) and I think its unfair to ask staff (**staff pressures**) to take onboard all the new, the ideas which are coming up unless we are giving time for them to really be reflective about what they are doing and how we can incorporate new ideas. (**reflective staff**) The whole issue of planning for improvement (**IMPROVEMENT**) now I think is really, a biggie for us and reaching higher standards, (**targets**) supporting children in their learning and I think that whole agenda really makes it important*

that we are addressing teachers needs in terms of moving forward (futuristic). I think teachers need to be prepared and we also need to give them the chance to update their skills. (necessary OPPORTUNITIES) So I think there is a great need for CPD.(positive reaction) With regard to the purpose I think, you can't expect people to take on board new ideas and to develop things if you are not giving time for them to actually find out about them and to be able to work as a staff to implement things.(time) So that's on the whole where I think there is a real need for CPD in the school.

The first concept here is that there is a *requirement for CPD*. The properties of that are that *rapid changes* are taking place and that teachers have to be prepared for future *challenges*. Another concept is that of *planning for improvement*, the properties being how children are *supported* and how *higher standards* are achieved. A third concept is that of *opportunities* and the given properties here are *updating skills* and *time*.

These concepts were developed through the researcher's reflections and her comparisons with other interviews. This assisted in the development of 'core categories' being established at each of the data collection stages and these and their relationships were explored and developed as the research progressed.

It was important to check that the concepts and subsequent categories that were emerging were valid and so measures were in place to accommodate this. For all of the data collection stages, with the exception of the first and last (due to the small number of interviews being conducted), the first half of the interviews were coded. The concepts and subsequent categories that were emerging from these were then checked through the analysis of the remaining interviews. In addition, the findings of the research were revealed to and discussed with participants of the focus group when they were interviewed for the third and fourth time, as an attempt to gain their views on the researcher's interpretations and assumptions. This proved to be a valuable step. These measures were considered important in increasing the validity of the study.

3.6 The Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted prior to the main investigation and proved to be a very worthwhile exercise. The objectives for conducting such a study were to give the researcher experience in conducting semi-structured interviews and analysing the data, to inform the direction of the main part of the study, to test whether these methods of data collection and analysis were suitable and therefore to add to the overall reliability of the main study.

Six head teachers (or deputes) were interviewed individually and six as part of a focus group. The transcripts were analysed and coded, literature was consulted and concepts and categories emerged that demonstrated that the phenomenon of *faith development needs of Catholic teachers* was worthy of further exploration. In addition, the pilot study was subjected to feedback from peers and academic colleagues as it was presented at a research seminar at Glasgow University's graduate school and published in the *Journal of In-service Education* in 2006 (Coll, 2006).

This valuable exercise allowed the researcher to reflect on her practice and refine this prior to embarking on the main part of the study. However, its results were of significance since they informed the direction and development of the main study and were therefore considered integral to it, as opposed to separate from it.

3.7 Summary

This qualitative study was conducted using a grounded theory approach throughout, where an inductive manner was adopted in terms of data collection and data analysis, resulting in concepts and categories emerging as the study progressed. These were subjected to continual reflection and comparison, and were supported by the consideration of relevant and appropriate literature.

It is considered that this has resulted in the research question being investigated in a reliable manner.

Chapter 4

THE PILOT STUDY

‘Teachers cannot create and sustain the conditions for the productive development of children if those conditions do not exist for teachers’

(Sarason, 1990: xiv).

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the pilot study that took place prior to conducting the main part of the research. The original purpose for engaging in this pilot stage was to test the methodology to be employed in the main part of the study and to develop the researcher's skills in the collection of data via the use of semi structured interviews. Indeed, this proved to be a valuable inclusion from which the researcher greatly benefited. However, the reason for including this pilot study as a separate chapter in the thesis lies in the significant theory that it generated—theory which has contributed to guiding the main part of the study. What follows is a detailed description of the pilot study, a thorough presentation of its context and a comprehensive discussion of the results and of how these contribute to the study's direction.

4.2 Context

The Catholic Education Commission (CEC) has commented that it is keen to complement the Scottish Executive's elevation of CPD, which, according to the Church, was correct in stressing the importance of professional development (CEC, 2003). However, as well as identifying curriculum and skills development as important, the Church has voiced its desire to address Catholic teachers' faith development. In the previous two decades the Catholic Church has expressed the view that 'all too frequently lay Catholics have not had a religious development that is equal to their general, cultural and most especially professional development' (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education 1982. No 60). Again this claim has been echoed in the most recent of Church documents on Catholic education where the encouragement of a journey of formation for the lay Catholic teacher is one of its main points of focus (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 2007). It can be argued that the main reason for this spotlight on faith development is sociological since the presence of religious teaching orders has diminished in Catholic schools in Scotland, almost to vanishing point (Fizpatrick 2001). There was an inbuilt assumption that the charism of these orders would pass to less experienced *lay* colleagues who worked alongside the professed religious teachers and while this did happen, it has faded out over the generations (O'Hagan 2006). Most lay teachers do not have the same theological knowledge and understanding or spiritual

development and devotion that religious teaching staff would experience by virtue of their ‘profession’. Indeed as new generations of lay Catholic teachers emerge, their understanding of their spiritual role, and articulation of this, in addition to their adherence to the traditions of their faith have come into question. Grace (2002: 237) refers to a weakening of the teacher’s ‘matrix of sources of spiritual capital’, where family background, prayer life and Mass attendance in addition to experiences of Catholic schooling no longer have the same influence in the lives of Catholics as they once did. In Catholic schools in Scotland today, most teaching staff *are* lay Catholics and the Church recognises that the future preservation of the distinctive religious character of its schools depends on these very people.

For this reason the Church has stressed the importance of this kind of development for its Catholic teachers and defines ‘faith formation’ or ‘faith development’ in terms of teachers becoming ‘more aware of their own spiritual natures’ and better able to represent the values of the Kingdom of God within the Catholic Church and in society as a whole (CEC 2003: 10). In doing so it is expected that the teacher in the Catholic school will then be more aware of the importance ‘of helping young people to understand the spiritual dimension of life’ (CEC 2003: 10). Like other areas of professional development, the Church recognises faith development as a challenge for teachers, but stresses its importance:

‘To reject a development...that involves the whole person – human, professional and religious – is to isolate oneself from that very world that has to be brought closer to the Gospel.’ (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education 1982: n.70)

The philosophical reason for CPD for the purpose of faith development is intrinsically related to the Catholic understanding of adult faith development—that is, that all adult Catholics have laid upon themselves by virtue of their baptism an obligation to deepen an understanding of the Church’s teaching, of scripture, of the sacraments and of how to give witness in whatever social or occupational context they have been placed.

‘Whatever you do in word or work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.’ (*Col. 3:17*)

Because Catholic teachers have the responsibility of forming the faith of children, this is then considered by the Church to be a doubly binding duty to enhance their own adult faith.

Teachers and educators, who carry on a distinguished form of the apostolate of the laity by their vocation and office, should be equipped with the learning and the pedagogical skill needed for imparting such apostolic training effectively.
(*Apostolicam Actuositatem* 1965: n30)

For some, the area of faith development of teachers may be viewed as being very personal and would not be considered as a legitimate focus for teachers’ professional development (Robinson, 2002). However, the Catholic Church in Scotland insists that this is an integral part of the Catholic teacher’s professional development since faith should penetrate all aspects of his/her career. There is, however, no legal requirement for Catholic teachers in Scotland to pursue CPD in the area of faith development. Instead, the Church stresses that this is a *moral* responsibility of all Catholic teachers since they are valued as being ‘central to the development of the school as a place of development’ (CEC 2003:11). The Church has recognised that it could scarcely be present or function without the activity of the non-ordained members (laity) of its faithful community (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 1965). It values and encourages the work of lay teachers and has recognised this from New Testament times (Acts 11:19-21; 18:26). A set of professional expectations is promoted by the Church in Scotland through the Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES) and the CEC, and is communicated to Catholic teachers in their initial teacher education programmes.

In Scottish education the Catholic Church has embraced the McCrone Agreement as an opportunity for promoting its own CPD agenda in terms of both curriculum and faith development. A recent example of this appeared in August 2003 when SCES produced ‘*Faith and Teaching*’ a CPD package designed to support Catholic teachers and their faith through a variety of CPD activities (CEC 2003). The Church has promoted this as a legitimate CPD venture since it

relates to the values dimension of teaching and echoes the CPD framework agreed by the state authorities. The package was constructed by representatives from SCES, Education Institutions and Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) and was jointly funded by the Scottish Executive.

4.3 Aim

As already detailed, faith development CPD is not a legal requirement for Catholic teachers to undertake but it is an expectation of the Church that it should be addressed. The aim of this pilot study was to elicit opinions and practices of Catholic school leaders in order to provide a picture that would be indicative of the CPD activities in the Catholic school in Scotland and to establish how important the whole area of faith development is considered to be by Catholic leaders.

As highlighted in the last chapter, twelve school leaders were interviewed for this part of the study. Six were interviewed individually and six were interviewed as part of a focus group. (Every single participant was a head teacher with the exception of one who was the depute in the school. However for the purpose of this thesis, from this point onwards all twelve will be referred to as 'head teachers'). It is possible to consider that these teachers may have given subjective and biased accounts of the faith activities and practices in their own schools or exaggerated them. However, as Grace (2002) observed in a study he too conducted with Catholic head teachers, 'the professional integrity of the head teachers as 'witnesses to truth' must also be acknowledged' (p211).

4.4 Results

The interview data were coded in order to elicit emerging concepts and to develop categories. As detailed in the last chapter, Strauss and Corbin's (1990) open coding took place resulting in the researcher grouping similar happenings and responses together to create categories. Discrete concepts are found within these categories and the fact that they share a common characteristic enabled the researcher to group them together.

Four main categories emerged:

- Purpose of CPD
- Quality of CPD
- Implementation of faith development CPD
- Sensitivity to faith development CPD

Each of these categories contained a number of concepts (or sub-categories) as shown in *figure 4.1*.

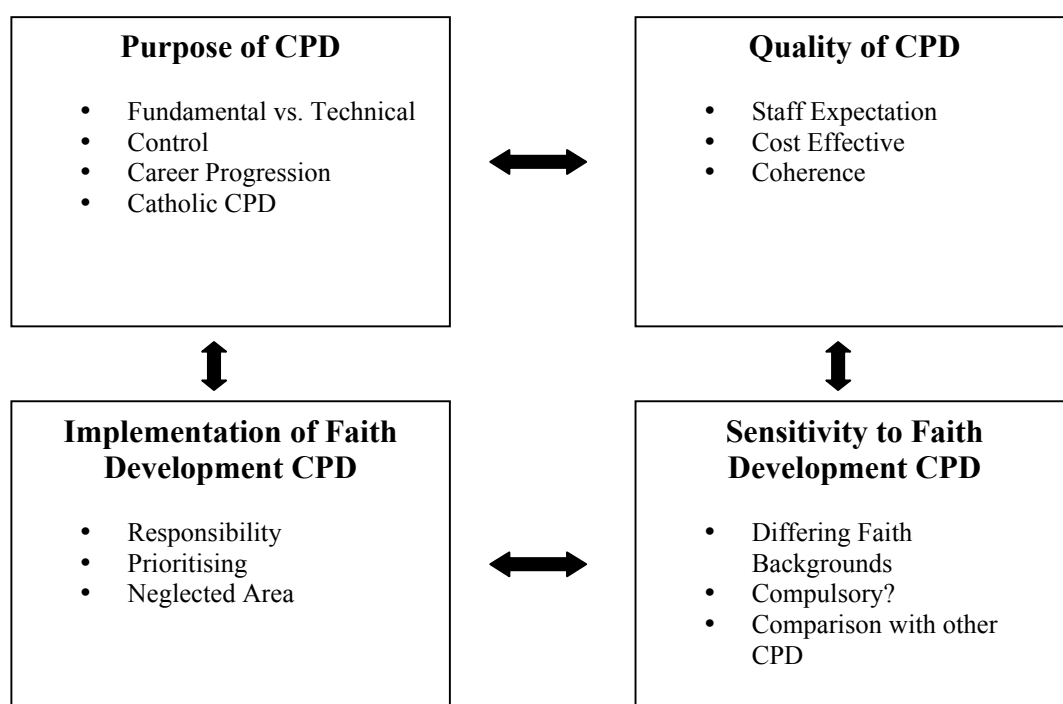


Figure 4.1: Pilot Study: Key Categories and their Concepts

4.4.1 Purpose of CPD

The head teachers were asked to comment on the purpose of CPD in their schools. In doing so a number of issues emerged. These were;

- The technical skills based CPD opportunities involved in the profession versus the activities that encourage reflection, challenge and discussion.
- Who controls and directs CPD in schools and essentially who dictates its purpose and,
- Individual career progression and its impact on the CPD agenda.

Fundamental v Technical

A tension emerged regarding the purpose of CPD. While the majority of those interviewed articulated a desire to ensure that staff would be given the opportunity to reflect and challenge themselves on specific areas of their overall work or embark on personal research and discussion, the examples of recent CPD activities almost entirely consisted of courses concerned with enhancing skills, developing new areas of the curriculum or informing staff about a new initiative to be implemented in their discipline. Examples such as ‘improving writing’, ‘developing ICT skills’ and ‘going to stained glass window art classes’ were given. One head teacher did comment on the lack of balance between the ‘technical things’ and the ‘fundamental things’ a teacher should develop in his or her professional career. Thérèse, a head teacher of a large primary school in a very affluent area of Glasgow suggested that all Scottish teachers, whom she considers to be facing a time of change and challenge, should be provided with time to reflect.

The pace of change just now is really rapid and I think we have to be prepared for meeting challenges for the future and it is unfair to ask staff to take onboard all the new ideas...unless we are giving them time ...to really be reflective.

However, when asked to give examples of general CPD activities, she mentioned a recent school inspection by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate and how the programme for CPD reflected the recommendations found in the inspection report; that is, skill based or ‘technical’ activities as opposed to those providing opportunities for reflection or discussion, activities Thérèse desired for her staff. It must be noted that the desire expressed for these opportunities for staff was not confined to a personal faith context, but rather to the wider professional context, relating to all aspects of the teacher’s career. This exemplifies possible constraints that head teachers face when determining CPD programmes.

A discussion arose amongst those interviewed as part of the focus group about the individual teacher now having a voice in determining his or her own CPD needs. However as the researcher probed further, conditions surrounding this ‘voice’ began to emerge.

I know of a teacher who would have written down aromatherapy as one of her choices. So there has to be some kind of balance in the approach and it depends on the individuals and schools etc. But essentially what we are saying is the system is going to be such that it is linked to their annual reviews which will also be linked to development planning.

When asked to give examples of the kinds of CPD activities that would be linked to their development plans, again very technical and skills based CPD activities were highlighted:

NOF (New Opportunities Fund for developing ICT skills) training... workshops in ICT where groups of staff receive development... modern languages.. story telling... play ground games... language.

James spoke of how head teachers had come together to talk about how best to use the CPD budget given to schools from the local authority. He explained that there was a recommendation from his own local authority that 50% of this budget was to be used to support the individual teacher and the other 50% for the school's development plan.

To be honest with you I could probably argue a case (about aromatherapy) if I wanted to. If I felt there was somebody really stressed and that was something I knew would benefit the person and would then benefit how you teach children, I could maybe argue that if I felt really important. What about an afternoon on the golf course? (laughter) I was wondering about whether I could do that! Trip to Seville! We as heads, had discussion, with regard to what would be acceptable with regards to CPD and there are different opinions on that.

Therefore, although there was some disagreement regarding appropriate CPD activities there was enough evidence to suggest that the kind of activities promoted by these head teachers were very much concerned with measurable competences and skills, which relate directly to the school development plan. This raises questions as to who has jurisdiction over CPD in schools.

Control

Control of the CPD programme in schools, therefore, became a further theme to emerge. In Scotland there are continued pressures at national level arising from the demands for increased quality in schools and local authorities have responded to this by creating their own CPD agenda. Tony, the depute of a large Catholic secondary in North Lanarkshire, commented on how his school related to this structure.

I like to look at it in terms of Russian dolls....we have National Priorities... the authority agenda and a Scottish agenda, teachers are not self employed. We have a school development plan, departmental development plans and individual development plans and they all fit in together and they have to be, like Russian dolls...the bottom line is we are all part of the same National goal.

Thérèse explained the pressure from her own local authority;

[The Local Authority] now has a policy and it is stating clearly that during that PRD meeting this CPD plan would be prepared and it must take account of school priorities, also the local agenda, the national agenda and teachers individual needs.... it is very difficult sometimes to accommodate individuals in that. Say for example one of the teachers is looking for a course on Aspergers you have to dig around a bit and you have to do a wee bit of homework and if the authority is not providing something then looking out with and that can be tricky. It is not always possible.

Purdon (2003a) has argued that in Scotland the creation of a national framework for CPD has resulted in the limitation of the diversity of opportunities available to teachers and that this curbs teacher autonomy. She claims that the control the Government exercises over the framework restricts the choice of appropriate CPD ventures by individual teachers and their managers, since the records for individual teachers, detailing activities undertaken for the statutory 35 hours contractual commitment, can be collated by local authorities (SEED 2002). Purdon argues that there is no clear indication as to the purpose of CPD in Scotland's schools or to its direction. She asserts that the Scottish Executive lacks vision and is unsure if CPD is about 'fulfilling personal needs and aspirations, meeting the development plans of schools and local authorities or fulfilling government priorities' (Purdon 2003b:948). The framework that has been introduced in Scotland relies mainly on a skills-based or competence-based approach, an approach that includes CPD activities that can be assessed and accredited. As previously highlighted, the terminology used throughout the Scottish Executive's documentation regarding CPD would suggest that competence and skills are higher on the CPD agenda rather than reflection, personal research and other such ventures concerned with what has been referred to by one of the participants in this study as the 'fundamentals' of teaching.

Five of the six head teachers who were interviewed individually did diagnose a need for CPD activities that encourage professional reflection and challenge, but these same head teachers appeared to be coerced by the authorities into adhering

to a much more hierarchical CPD agenda where the favoured model has tended to be ‘tightly-controlled, centrally-driven’ and ‘tied to government policy and practices’ (Humes 2001:10).

Career Progression

Career progression is another theme that emerged when determining the purpose of CPD. It is claimed that many teachers view CPD as necessary for—or even as a means to—promotion and so building an appropriate or suitable CPD portfolio is something to be expected. Tony commented that;

Teachers want to actively see opportunities to buy into a programme that is going to allow them to develop as professionals

Consideration should then be given to the nature of the courses available. Teachers aspire to produce a CPD profile that includes activities that future employers would consider desirable, appropriate and sometimes essential for promotion. With the demands placed on head teachers from local authorities along with the weight of national expectations, a CPD profile responding to these demands would, of course, be looked on much more favourably than activities that lacked formal recognition or simply focused on personal reflection and thought. It could be argued that a course on management skills, for example, would be looked on more favourably than a series of afternoons spent observing and reflecting on the teaching of peers.

4.4.2 Quality of CPD

Schools have many CPD courses or activities on offer for staff and most of those interviewed for this study stressed the importance of the quality of these courses. When considering CPD for the purpose of faith development three main points emerged in relation to quality. These were;

- staff expectations of the courses provided,
- how cost effective these courses are,
- the cooperation of the providers in cohering these specific CPD opportunities.

Staff Expectation

The claim was made that teaching staff in Scotland's schools are much more discerning than ever before when it comes to CPD experiences. As a result there is a need to ensure that CPD providers produce quality products. It was claimed that teachers are '*fed up with poor service*' and this concerns head teachers since it '*breeds cynicism*'. Nick commented that,

teachers have never been more professional in terms of their need for development and they are eager to take advantage of quality opportunities.

One could of course conclude that this seeming advancement in teachers' professionalism in Scotland is down to the implementation of the McCrone Agreement, where 35 hours of CPD is a contractual commitment. Humes (2001) argues that a culture of complacency and compliance among teachers has existed for many years, but that the McCrone Agreement provides an opportunity for teachers to raise their voices and be heard. Since CPD has changed in that it has become statutory, it is not at all unexpected that staff are much more discerning about the choice of course or activity that will contribute to their CPD profile.

Head teachers expect value for money. Classroom teachers expect value for taking a day out of class, or sacrificing an evening or weekend. Teachers, according to the experienced judgement of the head teachers interviewed, will not accept CPD courses or opportunities that fail to do what they propose, especially now that there is a contractual CPD commitment. This has implications for providers but also for the managers, since they have a role in deciding the courses or opportunities to promote.

The Catholic Church and its representative bodies (CEC and SCES) are encouraged by the participants in this study to ensure that the courses or activities on offer are of a high standard so that they can compete with the wide range of other attractive courses on offer. John, a head teacher of a large Catholic secondary school 30 miles from Glasgow commented that

if you are saying to people [teachers] in the limited amount of time they have, give up your subject time...I want you to do this then it has got to be good...if you are

persuading, encouraging people to make time for whatever faith means to them then it has not got to be time that they see is wasted, it has to be quality stuff, it has got to be quality.

The word 'quality' is commonly used in the field of education where concepts such as 'quality assurance' and 'quality enhancement' are referred to on a regular basis. However, what is meant by the school leaders when they refer to the word 'quality' in the context of CPD is worthy of consideration. Robert Pirsig (2007) suggests that quality has to be owned since it is the harmonious relationship between parts. This, then, would suggest a proactive approach to CPD on the part of the learner if quality is to be achieved. However, there is some anecdotal evidence to suggest that there is a gap between the popular perception of teachers' responses to such activities and the reality of the perception of CPD courses.

It appears, then, that as staff become much more aware of the CPD opportunities currently in existence, the promotion of CPD concerned with the faith development of teachers requires to be planned, advertised and implemented very carefully in order to satisfy the teaching staff. As already highlighted, the fact that the CPD opportunities on offer from the Church do not always adhere to the course model approach could reduce the appeal for both teachers and head teachers. Ensuring the quality of these opportunities would appear then to be crucial. *Faith and Teaching* has been recognised by the Scottish Executive as a valid CPD activity since it had a representative involved in its production and because it has supported its publication financially. It can be argued that this has raised its profile considerably and has made it much more attractive to potential clients. However, the effect of its implementation and the level of the quality of such ventures remain to be seen.

The whole thing is going to be who is delivering this, how is it being delivered and what the perception is of teachers who initially have the experience of these.

Cost Effective

Participants in this study were concerned about financing their CPD programmes and ensuring that the activities were cost effective. All twelve head teachers discussed value for money and the management of the CPD budget. Sending

staff on one day, one-off courses during the school day was not viewed as cost effective as courses are considered expensive and often the head teachers have to pay for supply teachers to cover staff absences. It was not just the cost of course-based CPD that was discussed but also its effect. Maria, the head teacher of a Catholic primary school in North Lanarkshire, conveyed her reluctance to send her staff individually on courses:

..if somebody comes in and speaks to the staff then all the staff are getting the same information at the same time Whereas if one person is going out to a course depending on what it is, the responsibility is in the school for them to come back and disseminate that information to everybody. Now with the best will in the world you are not going to remember everything and you try to write it all down, I have even tried to do it myself and I can't.

Tony echoed this:

..how do you feed that development back to other members of staff in the school ?

It seems, then, that one-off courses to which individuals are sent are not the most cost effective choice even though this model is popularly promoted by the local authorities and the national CPD framework. Hoban (2002) argues that those promoting one-off courses have a simplistic view of the nature of teaching. He comments on the lack of support after the course and points out that very rarely do they promote change.

Some participants had experimented with other methods of getting the most out of CPD. Examples included buying someone in to speak to the whole school or, as Thérèse explained, inviting other local schools to join in and share in the development and the costs. Fullan (1995:3) criticises this particular style since he has argued that 'schools by and large are not places of reflection and learning when it comes to their own continuing development'. Nevertheless, ensuring that the learning that takes place on such courses is disseminated to others in the school, was a desire expressed by those interviewed.

Reflecting on the CPD opportunities concerned with the faith development of Catholic teachers, it would seem that the Church is at an advantage given the CPD opportunities it already has in existence. *Faith and Teaching* promotes a

list of possible CPD activities, ranging from personal study to participating in a retreat or engaging in faith sharing sessions. The traditional course model is not promoted to any great extent and Michael explained that;

...the way in which the bundles of in-service experiences are put together under different themes in 'Faith and Teaching' I think is excellent rather than just say there is a course here, there is a course there, they are bundling in-service courses, a video, a chapter of a book...it is coherent, almost like a wee portfolio and something which I would like to transfer to other areas of CPD in the school.

This structure then, that the Church has embraced, seems to appeal to head teachers owing to it being cost effective in benefiting more staff.

Coherence

Coherence of CPD was a recurring concept to emerge from the study. Ensuring cooperation between the agencies concerned with promoting and providing CPD in relation to the Catholic nature of the school, was a suggestion emerging from the interviews. It was commented that in terms of faith development CPD, the CEC, SCES, the Faculty of Education in the University of Glasgow and the diocesan advisers should make a concerted effort to ensure that they do not waste their time vying for the same participants. Nick, when supporting this viewpoint, suggested that quality of the CPD courses relied on a well structured, well thought through programme where different providers work together:

I mean there are lots of people out there as well as people in the Faculty and the RE auspices who are good but I think it needs to be a concerted effort so we are not vying for the same customers. We are not wasting time overlapping...

4.4.3 Implementation of Faith Development CPD

Within the limitations of this pilot stage, this study indicates that a clear desire exists among head teachers to have faith development CPD implemented in their schools. However, more often than not, participants spoke in the future tense when addressing this issue, suggesting that CPD of this kind was not a common occurrence. A number of concepts emerged in relation to the implementation of this type of CPD:

- The responsibility of Catholic teachers to engage in such CPD.

- The whole area of prioritisation when planning and implementing the CPD programme.
- Reasons as to why this kind of CPD has been neglected in the past.

Responsibility

Without exception, participants in this study agreed that Catholic teachers have a responsibility to engage in CPD opportunities that are concerned with their faith and its development. Of all responses given during this study, the question about teacher's responsibility to address faith development generated the strongest feedback;

'It is our [Catholic teachers'] responsibility to move forward in that area as it is in any other aspect of school life'.

'Yes, for teachers, that responsibility is definitely there'.

'If you are employed within a Catholic school then there is an expectation of you'.

'This has got to be part of their ongoing development'.

'The onus is on to show by your example what it means to live your faith'.

Within the focus group one head teacher commented that the argument for CPD for the purpose of faith development of teachers goes hand in hand with the justification of Catholic schools.

You can't make an argument for CPD in Catholic Schools if you haven't got an argument for Catholic schools, the two of them go together. If you can't justify a Catholic school then you can't justify Catholic CPD if you can't justify (Catholic)CPD then you can't justify Catholic schools

There was general recognition that it was also a responsibility of the school to ensure that faith development was taking place. One respondent observed that Catholic schools should be and are 'different' as a result of faith:

people have to make that happen and they have to do it from a really sound belief, religious background.

It might be reasonable to assume that leaders of Catholic schools would feel obligated to make statements of this nature, but it is important to note that historically CPD for faith development has not played a part in CPD. It has never been high on the CPD agenda for Catholic schools, since these schools are

local authority schools and CPD was, until very recently, determined by the local authority. As already illustrated, the change in the new CPD climate means that head teachers—potentially—have greater autonomy in determining the CPD programme. Traditionally, faith development had been viewed as being a private affair and not necessarily an active CPD practice of schools. Therefore, there is no *necessity* for these leaders to support this since the historical weight of CPD practice is against it. Of course, it will always be the case that head teachers of Catholic schools would desire that their staff be faith committed and faith active, but it is quite another to say that faith development should be part of CPD.

Prioritisation

The desire to encourage staff to engage in this particular area of responsibility was expressed but it was recognised that historically this has not been a priority.

The difficulty is it is competing with so many things...we are trying to prioritise this as highly as we can...certainly very often schools are left with not a lot to work with in terms of time, but if that sounds like an excuse it is certainly not intended to be one.

This view was supported by four other head teachers. They indicated that faith development has not been high on the CPD agenda owing to external and sometimes internal pressures, such as those discussed earlier in this chapter. Tony explained his dilemma;

The difficulty is it is competing with so many other things. For example we want to launch the 'Faith and Teaching' programme this year and already I am into in-service day four before I can even think about it because there is such a backlog of things which have to be dealt with. We are trying to prioritise as highly as we can and hopefully it will happen in February.

Many Religious Education CPD activities had taken place but the majority of them were concerned with the development of the Religious Education curriculum or the sacramental initiation of children. One head teacher who did give examples of faith development activities that had taken place in his school referred to them in such a way that suggested that they were not considered a main feature of school life.

We have done things like wee staff mini retreats after schools... we do staff things like that. So I think that they have been fairly well received, we are not saying that every member of staff comes or anywhere near that.

Neglected Area

There was general agreement that the area of faith development for staff has been neglected for some time. The language that participants used when talking about faith development in their schools was particularly revealing. Much of it was subjunctive, explaining what they *would* or *could* do in this area, indicating that it was not currently receiving or had not received much attention. For example;

Yeah, this is an area I would want to develop... I think that there is a big need for that.
[Nick]

I think that the school should do more to encourage people to think about this. [Patricia]

I think there is a place in Catholic schools or whatever to go to maybe at some point, maybe in an evening or whatever to go on a retreat and get some spiritual input.
[Maria]

One head teacher interviewed in the focus group admitted that this had not been something he'd considered before and asked his peers how this type of CPD could be justified;

But how does that sit with workloads? [Paul]

A number of reasons were suggested for neglecting this area including time, budget and other pressures. In addition, it was indicated that there had been few opportunities available from CPD providers with regard to faith development. In fact Nick referred to it as a 'vacuum'. He even went as far to say that if CPD opportunities of this nature don't exist then Catholic schools may lose credibility. John had another take on it. He commented that, *'this area has been neglected because there is this feeling that it is implicit in what we do'*.

Sensitivity associated with this particular kind of CPD was raised. The head teachers indicated that they felt uneasy approaching this subject with their staff for a number of reasons. (These will be discussed in the following section.) In the secondary sector, those participating admitted that occasionally Catholic staff felt uncomfortable embarking on CPD that was not directly concerned with their subject area. John explained that some staff did not want to be given additional RE responsibilities.

They are wary because as soon as they start to sign up to specialist Catholic education as part of their CPD they anticipate being 'het'[sic] next year.

Consideration must be given to the context in which Scottish Catholic schools find themselves. They are located within local authorities along with nondenominational schools, schools that are expected to respond to the same local and national pressures that Catholic schools are faced with. The nondenominational sector has the same amount of time and money to devote to CPD. If Catholic schools and their teachers embark on CPD concerned with faith development, CPD that the nondenominational sector has not in the past responded to, then that will be at the expense of another 'secular' CPD activity that the nondenominational sector will have time to embrace. It could be argued that competitiveness and 'being seen' to do the right thing may have contributed to neglecting CPD for the purpose of faith development. As Tony voiced, *'it is very important, but how much time can you actually devote to it?'* It must be noted that three of the six head teachers who were interviewed individually did highlight faith development CPD activities that had taken place in their schools albeit, they admitted, to a small extent.

In theory, the participants support faith development CPD activities for their staff but the lack of evidence of these opportunities betrays the verbal acknowledgement that this is an area school managers are committed to developing.

4.4.4 Sensitivity to Faith Development CPD

Sensitivity was an underpinning concept that all participants observed with regard to CPD for the purpose of faith development. Although continuing to endorse CPD of this nature, the head teachers spoke of how it required 'careful handling'. The following areas were addressed:

- The differing faith backgrounds of staff.
- Whether or not this form of CPD should be compulsory.
- Comparing this kind of CPD to others.

Differing faith backgrounds

As a result of different upbringings in terms of parental influence, religious observance, choice of schooling and so on, within the Catholic population of Scotland there exists a wide range of religious experience and faith development. The situation is no different for Catholic teachers. Even their formal Initial Teacher Education (ITE) experiences will have been different, particularly with regard to different generations of teachers. Indeed two participants commented on recently qualified teachers' lack of knowledge in terms of their faith compared with the older generation in the school. According to Thérèse,

You have people committing themselves to Catholic teaching and they do not come with the same background knowledge that people had a generation ago because things are different now and it is a different ball game altogether.

This was echoed by Maria,

Actually my Deputy Head and I were just talking about this the other day there that it is going to be even more of a need as the years go on. I actually worry sometimes about the faith of the young teachers. I have been very fortunate in here I have to say, but I know from other schools there is a question mark there with some of them.

Although it could be argued that this is a generalisation, it is accepted that the faith development aspect to formal Catholic education has changed over the years and is not as rigorous as before. Even when considering those that did receive similar Catholic upbringings and similar ITE, the effect of this will differ from person to person. One could go as far as to say that within the same family, siblings will display different levels of commitment to faith even though they share the same parents and background. Therefore the head teachers in this study recognised prior faith development and commitment as an issue for teachers in their school. For example, all Maths teachers will have demonstrated, at a particular level, that they have the mathematical knowledge, ability and skill to enter the teaching profession in their subject. The faith of a Catholic teacher cannot be assessed in the same way. Although all Catholic teachers require approval to teach in the Catholic school, the extent of their faith, knowledge or belief may never be properly determined. It cannot be standardised.

In Scotland the Catholic Church recognises that children have very different faith backgrounds. ‘Since members of any school community will not be at the same level of faith commitment, a sensitive awareness of the personal situation of each individual will be necessary’ (CEC and SOED 1994:2). The same can be said for teachers. Knowledge of doctrine, experiences of worship and faith development vary and the participants in this study observed that some teachers do not always feel confident or even comfortable with CPD addressing their own personal faith.

For me to go to someone and say, there is an excellent course coming up on an aspect of faith development. That is a wee bit more sensitive. It is just being careful and not putting pressure on people is the way to handle it maybe. [John]

The issue of sensitivity also raises further questions regarding the expectation of the Church for Catholic teachers to be engaged in such activities.

Faith development - Compulsory?

Catholic schools claim to be distinctive and one of the elements they insist makes them distinct from other schools, is that they educate children according to the faith of the Catholic Church. They purport to, ‘seek to integrate ...a specific religious tradition which fosters faith in the daily life of the members of the school community’ (CEC and SOED 1994:4).

It seems appropriate, therefore, to assume that the teacher has an important role to play in the realisation of this. One could claim that in order to assist children in this ‘ongoing journey’ of faith development, teachers should have experience of this process themselves. This principle is not alien to education in general as Sarason (1990) has observed. The Church advocates a consistent view: ‘Teachers are valued by the Church as being central to the development of the school as a place of development’. For this reason, ‘the Church recognises the importance of teacher development being ongoing and developmental – a constant growth of knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and skills...’ (CEC 2003:11). Should then, CPD concerned with personal faith of individuals be enforced? If faith development of children is one of the most significant features distinguishing Catholic schools from their nondenominational neighbours, and since it is the role of Catholic teachers to assist in the realisation of this, should the ongoing faith development of teachers be compulsory?

Another issue head teachers have to consider is the expectation of Catholic parents. In Scotland, Catholic parents have a choice of school to which to send their children and overwhelmingly the majority still choose the Catholic sector (Bradley 1995). There are a number of reasons for this, but one of the main factors is the transmission of the Catholic message to their children (Fitzpatrick 2003). In our democracy, parents devolve a large part of their authority to schools and, as articulated by Fitzpatrick, for a successful outcome a ‘consensus of outlook between parents and teachers is essential’ (2003:279). It is widely recognised that many Catholic parents do not adopt a lifestyle that would adhere to Church teachings, however most expect Catholic teachers to have a particular demeanour, life-style and a commitment to faith, and its development is envisaged as part of that. ‘It is the quality of integration of faith and life in the person of the teacher that ennobles the work of the teacher’ (Fitzpatrick 2003:279).

The respondents in this study varied widely in their views on whether this kind of CPD should be compulsory. They agreed that, although it is a sensitive issue, it is necessary for Catholic staff and all should engage in it. However, a whole school approach was recommended as a way of introducing it, one which might alleviate any negative responses. Thérèse commented,

I can't see of any reason why there should be opting out in a programme like that. There wouldn't be opting out if it were something to do with problem solving or something to do with writing or whatever, especially if you are moving forward as a school – everyone has to be involved.

Two of the secondary head teachers even went as far to say that all teaching staff, even those who are not Catholic, should be involved in this. All respondents were very reluctant to pinpoint individuals to engage in such CPD. One participant, who did not believe that it should be compulsory, said that it should be ‘offered’ to staff the same way as other CPD opportunities. When discussing this issue in the focus group, Patricia observed that the outcome of this kind of CPD cannot be measured. People who embark on faith development activities don’t know where it will lead them and neither does the head teacher. She explained, ‘you can’t send people on a personal search and tell them what

they are going to find... I think you have to take all of that on board.' This kind of opportunity then, was differentiated from the other kind of CPD activities previously mentioned and so there was general agreement that it had to be approached sensitively.

Faith Development CPD compared to other CPD activities

Competence in problem solving or the teaching of French can be measured to a certain extent, and the exam results may be used as one source of evidence to illustrate if a teacher is able or is in need of development in the field. Using such crude measures in the same way to determine a level of faith would not be appropriate and a head teacher could not and, most would argue, should not judge a teacher with regard to this. One can conclude that CPD concerned with this is very different from other forms of CPD and should be treated differently. As this study highlights, CPD concerned with faith development is considered an important area of development by those interviewed. It would seem plausible, then, that the suggestion of a whole school approach would be the most appropriate way to move forward, a way in which all teachers are given the opportunity to engage in the activity while knowing that they have not been singled out. Nick discussed a possible strategy for ensuring that staff would benefit from this kind of development while not feeling pressurised. He promoted staff consultation as a means to ensuring that teachers do not feel threatened.

If you have a wee background in discussing these things with staff and putting on staff things no matter how simple they are then you are beginning to sow the seeds and it is maybe something that has not come out of the blue all of a sudden...it should come as no big surprise then that this is an area for development...

He continued by talking about the kind of example that those within the school should give to others, both children and adults and how effective that can be in supporting faith.

We do try and say that this isn't a school where Catholics come to, it is a Catholic school and it affects everything that we do and therefore if that is the case then we have got to make that happen and we have got to try and build up teachers awareness of that...

John agreed and highlighted the need to support staff,

...you have to provide opportunities to encourage people, I think as managers of the school you have an expectation that people bring a faith commitment and you should nurture that commitment and encourage that commitment but I don't think you can dictate it.

The approach, then, to this kind of development was recognised by interviewees as requiring time and dedication from the head teacher in order for it to have the desired effect.

4.5 Commentary

This study aimed to identify twelve Catholic head teachers' perceptions of Continuing Professional Development for the purpose of faith development of Catholic teachers in Scotland. Issues emerged after the analysis of data using the process of grounded theory, and these ranged from the practicalities of engaging staff in such CPD experiences to the quality of opportunities and the wider political CPD agenda. As Marker has expressed, traditionally professional development has been one of the 'poor relations' of Scottish education. He has claimed that, 'unless the situation changes, professional development for many teachers will continue to be an ad hoc low level activity whose value they are sceptical of and which compares ill with that demanded by other professions' (Marker 1999:924). However, the recommendations found in the McCrone Agreement have provided all stakeholders in Scottish education with the opportunity to address the 'bleak' CPD situation (Humes 2001:6).

In 2003 the Catholic Church launched a CPD initiative called *Faith and Teaching* which aimed to begin to address individuals' personal faith development in that it provides a variety of opportunities to reflect, discuss and spend time considering faith commitment and development. As this Pilot study has suggested, the implementation of this approach to CPD of this nature is not without controversy. Some may have difficulty in accepting that this is an area related to teachers' professional development, viewing it as something personal and distinct. The approach is new and the area of faith development is not something in which schools have formally engaged in the past. It is recognised as a sensitive area. The shared concerns of Catholic school managers anticipating sensitivity to CPD dealing with faith development should not be

ignored. Respondents commented on how individual Catholic teachers may feel uncomfortable with this area. In addition, all respondents demonstrated a verbal commitment to ensuring that staff do engage in these kinds of CPD opportunities as this will assist teachers in their role as Catholic educators. An observer may see the continuation of the supposed ‘distinctiveness’ of the Catholic school as a factor for this commitment, where head teachers try to ensure that these schools retain a strong Catholic identity to secure continued existence.

The head teachers interviewed were clear that the quality of the ‘products’ on offer for CPD must be of a high standard. This has implications for the providers that are competing in a highly competitive market. If CPD for faith development purposes is to be supported, then activities and courses must be of a particular standard. The appeal of *Faith and Teaching* seems to lie in its difference, since it is not course, nor competence based, like the majority of other opportunities. Rather, it claims that it encourages time and reflection to concentrate on some of the ‘fundamental’ aspects of the Catholic teacher’s vocation. Although it may appeal to school managers, *Faith and Teaching* exists alongside the competence based, centrally controlled CPD framework that accredits teachers and can add to an accepted profile for CPD, the kind of profile that Catholic teachers will want for promotion purposes. The Church, then, finds itself in a challenging situation. It may have to consider carefully the CPD opportunities it promotes and be aware that head teachers, while appearing to support these activities, worry about the external CPD pressures they face. The Catholic Church’s CPD agenda exists within a CPD context that does not seem to promote to any significant degree the kind of activities found in *Faith and Teaching*; activities that, for example, ‘encourage teachers to become more aware of their own spiritual natures’; activities that ‘assist teachers in the evaluation of their own contribution to the effectiveness of the school as a Christian community of faith’ (CEC 2003:5). The Church may have to choose between pursuing innovation in its CPD activities or reacting to national pressures resulting in conforming to the model of CPD that is promoted by the Government through the National CPD framework. The latter would, as Humes describes, be detrimental to the whole philosophy of professional development. ‘Professionalism as conformity is a weak and unworthy notion’ (Humes 2001:9).

Perhaps working more closely with the Scottish Government will result in stronger recognition of the CPD opportunities the Church promotes. A good relationship exists between the Catholic Church and the Scottish Government and, in terms of education, both bodies have worked together successfully in the past (Coll, 2002).

The Catholic Church would appear to have been innovative in creating the *Faith and Teaching* package, since it promotes opportunities for Catholic teachers in Scotland to explore something new and something different. This appears to be a style of opportunity that many have been advocating for some time in that it allows teachers to explore fundamental aims and values (see Humes 2001, Purdon 2001, Marker 1999). As Humes (2001) eloquently explains, it is important to ask ‘What is it that teachers profess?’ He doubts that it is a list of competences or benchmarks. ‘A more likely response is that they would appeal to values and principles concerned with such things as the worthwhileness of learning, their commitment to helping youngsters develop, their desire to help them achieve...’ (p15).

With a centrally controlled, standardised CPD framework in place in Scotland—which promotes numerous competence-based courses and activities—head teachers in Catholic schools have indicated that they find it a challenge to respond to the Church’s desire to, not only support teachers in the continuation of their professional development, but also in the development of their faith.

4.6 Considerations for main study

The theory generated from this pilot study has been used in directing the main part of this research. The views of the head teachers presented in this chapter raised significant questions and revealed concepts which were sometimes integrated into the interview schedules which were used with those participating in the main study. In addition, the theory from this part of the study was reflected upon when considering the responses of the Catholic teachers, allowing for the triangulation of thoughts. In particular, for the next stages, a number of points from this part of the study were considered significant and worthy of further exploration. These were:

- The view that a weakening in the ‘matrix of sources of spiritual capital’ of newly qualified Catholic teachers exists and the impact that this has on teachers’ knowledge and understanding of Church documentation on issues regarding their faith.
- The leadership of the head teacher in nurturing the faith of the teacher by providing opportunities for its development (as opposed to dictating and directing this.)
- The balance in the kind of CPD opportunities available for teachers and,
- The priority given to CPD for the purpose of faith development.

The main study results will now be presented.

Chapter 5
RESULTS

‘Teaching has an extraordinary moral depth and is one of our most excellent and creative activities. For the teacher does not write on inanimate material, but on the very spirits of human beings.’

(Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education 1998: 19)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into four sections, each corresponding to the first four data collection stages that took place during the study. Within the sections, the outcomes of the data analysis for the individual stages will be presented and discussed.

The interviews were coded and analysed after each round of data collection and the focus was not on individual cases, but rather on identifying and establishing core categories emerging from the data as a whole. A core category emerged for the individual stages of the study, and within each of these, subcategories and concepts evolved. These were tracked from one stage to the next in order to monitor their development and determine if they required further exploration or discussion. As this chapter will illustrate, some of these developed into main categories then into concluding theory. *Table 5.1* presents the core category that emerged for each stage and the subcategories associated with them. The relationships between the different stages are also made clear. (The comparative dimension to the study and the stage exploring the views of senior Catholic Education representatives are also presented in *Table 5.1*, but their results will be considered in subsequent chapters.)

Stage one of the study will now be considered in detail.

Stage 1: Considering the Journey Ahead	Stage 2: From Theory to Practice	Stage 3: Socialisation: Finding a Voice	Stage 4: Catholic Teachers: Witnesses to Faith	The Comparative Stage (NSW, Australia)	CEC/SCES Pointing to the Future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity <i>Social histories. Faith influences.</i> • Self-perceptions <i>Role. Concern. Experience.</i> • Expectations <i>Faith development. Collaboration. School support.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catholic teacher's role <i>Teacher as Church. Teacher as Witness.</i> • Faith development <i>Self-development. CPD.</i> • Impact of leadership <i>Explicit/Implicit support. Community.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbolic leadership <i>Words and Actions. 'Shared' leadership.</i> • Community <i>Faith Development.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith development <i>Faith Triggers. Response.</i> • Professional development needs. <i>Why <u>Professional</u> Development? Faith needs.</i> • Understanding of Role <i>Ownership. Collective Responsibility.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith identity <i>Biographies. Cosmopolitan faith?</i> • Catholic teacher's role <i>'Values' versus 'Witness'</i> • Faith development needs <i>Symbolic leadership. Knowledge.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges <i>Role Neglect Responsibility</i> • Awakenings <i>Powerful influences Church involvement</i> • Leadership <i>Support Obstacles and inconsistencies</i> • Political Implications <i>Positive relationships CPD Focus</i>

Table 5.1: Core categories and subcategories for each stage in the research.

5.2 Stage one – Considering the Journey Ahead

It is claimed that many student teachers construct their career choice not in terms of professional progression or salary opportunities but in terms of a belief that this work is socially meaningful, challenging and will assist in the development of pupils for the good of the individual and of society (Younger *et al* 2004). The good of the pupil is held as a high priority and the ambition and desire to connect with the children they teach, in an attempt to make an impact on their lives, is a highly motivating idealism that encourages committed individuals to enter the profession.

In Scotland, there exists a number of institutions offering students a pathway to teaching in both the primary and secondary sectors via a variety of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses—these include a mixture of four-year undergraduate courses and a one-year full-time or two-year part-time postgraduate study. Owing to the rigorous scrutiny of these courses by the General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS) on behalf of the Scottish Government, and the expectation that all finishing students will have satisfied or exhibited an agreed set of standards prior to probation (QAA, 2000), the programmes of study on offer from the different institutions have many similarities and so students have traditionally chosen an establishment for reasons relating to geographical location or reputation rather than for any real difference to the content of course. (Some ITE institutions do have additional courses on offer, for example Physical Education ITE programmes.) However, the ITE courses on offer at the University of Glasgow have a significant difference from those found elsewhere in the country since, in Glasgow, recruitment focuses not only on attracting intelligent and capable students with the desire to educate children, but specifically on encouraging *Roman Catholic* students to embark on teacher education studies by offering the Catholic Teachers' Certificate, thereby enabling them to teach in Catholic Schools across the country, subject to approval. At the time of conducting this study the numbers of Catholic students on three of the initial teacher education courses were as follows:

- Bachelor of Education with Honours (BEd (Hons)) – 97.5% Catholic students

- Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) Secondary Teaching course - 68% Catholic students
- Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) Primary Teaching course - 65% Catholic students

The methodology chapter has established that twenty-six student Catholic teachers from the University of Glasgow were tracked over a three-year period for the purpose of this study. The first round of interviews was conducted during the final twelve weeks of the students' ITE course. The analysis of these interviews generated three main categories. These were:

- *identity*
- *self perceptions and,*
- *expectations.*

These categories contributed to establishing the core category for this stage namely, *Considering the Journey Ahead*. All three contained numerous concepts (see *Figure 5.1*) each of which will be considered in turn.



Figure 5.1: Stage One: Key Categories and their Concepts

5.2.1 Identity

The first main category to emerge was that of *identity*. It has been argued elsewhere (Coll 2007a) that in a globalized world full of continuous change and short-term commitments, the desire to seek attachment and belonging in an attempt to anchor one's identity is a very live issue. Nationalism is one example of identity that has such appeal for anchorage, since it can provide powerful historical narratives, symbolism and beliefs that give people a sense of security and stability. Religion is another.

Crawford & Rossiter (2006) explain that individuals are unique persons but they also are a part of cultural reference groups and this has an influence on the shaping of personal identity. They define personal identity as 'a process in which individuals draw on both internal and cultural resources for their self-understanding and self-expression' (ibid: 124). The Catholic student teachers interviewed for the purpose of this study spoke of their identities and discussed their backgrounds and reasons for religious attachments. It revealed the concept of identity to be an important factor when considering the career choice of becoming a Catholic teacher. In exploring this further, the subcategories of *social histories* and *faith influences* will now be considered.

Social Histories

Within this research, the intrinsic reasons for choosing to teach in a Catholic school were centrally linked to student teachers' biographies and social histories. The research revealed that 88% of the student teachers identified their background as a major reason for their decision to attend Glasgow University and gain their Catholic Teachers' Certificate. A number of these students did not give any theological, political or educational reason for their choice. Phrases such as '*obvious sector*' and '*natural thing to do*' were used, indicating a loyalty and sense of belonging to their community. Some appeared to be unreflective about their position and admitted simply being comfortable in the tradition and that they did not know any differently:

Well, I'm Catholic myself so it wasn't a choice that I would choose the nondenominational sector.

I'm Catholic myself and I've been brought up as a Catholic so it made sense to carry it on.

I've chosen it primarily because I'm a Catholic myself so I don't really know anything else other than that.

For some it was the inherent value of 'continuing' or 'passing on' the faith and being a part of the community:

Because of my upbringing, I was always at a Catholic school em basically that's what I believe, and obviously I want to go in to a Catholic school and kind of share that and that's just the upbringing that I've had, that's what I see as being normal for me.

I've always been brought up within Catholic Education and I feel it is part of my faith to pass that on.

I'm a Catholic and I see that it's been important to continue that faith.

For others, however, a considered thought process clearly had taken place and they were able confidently to articulate their desire to be a part of the Catholic system:

I'm a committed practising Catholic, I see the value of Catholic Education and, wishing to be a teacher I want to participate in that particular sector

I've been brought up a Catholic and the Catholic ethos in schools that I've seen is one of the main reasons. I think that there is a better quality of Education.

I believe in Catholic Education and its importance for society and I think that Catholic schools are a sign of society that parents should have the democratic right to send their children to whatever school they want and are a reflection of different shades of society and how schools should be in the future.

Catholic schools provide children with a different grounding in education ... and I like making sure that religion is some part of children's lives

This study has revealed, then, that identity and belonging to the Catholic community is, for some students, justification alone for choosing to study to teach in the Catholic sector. For others there have been additional reasons, relating to a firm belief in the principles of faith-based education or to personal experience or to knowledge of its perceived merits, but a cohort of students admitted that they entered this sector because they simply 'belong to it'. It could be argued that this is not a healthy position, since students may be blinkered in their choice, having failed to consider other options. Paradoxically it could be perceived as being a very strong position—students have not considered other

options because they are so immersed in their tradition and feel strongly about remaining within it.

At this stage a reminder of the historical context in which these students find themselves is crucial. As the background chapter to this thesis has already highlighted, 85% of the students interviewed belong to Scottish Catholic families whose origins are to be found in an immigrant Irish community which claims to have experienced significant hostility and prejudice against it over the last century (MacMillan (2000), Bradley (2004)). Grace's view is that, for many anglophone countries, Catholic schools were 'constructed and constituted as citadels and fortresses for the preservation of the faith in a hostile external environment characterised by a dominant Protestant order, continuing anti-Catholic prejudice and the growing influence of secularisation' (2000:7). Looking specifically at Scotland, a counter argument exists suggesting that the Catholic community's view of the Catholic school was *not* from a culturally defensive position, but rather from a forward thinking one, which was flexible and open to innovation as O'Hagan and Davis (2007) have illustrated in their study of the relationship between Church and State in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Regardless, it has been accepted that the struggle to survive and thrive in Scotland has resulted in the well-established and strengthened identity of this community—and strong allegiances to it—to the present day. It is not surprising, then, that many of the students in this study exhibit a firm attachment to the community to which they belong.

Faith Influences

When discussing their religious backgrounds and 'faith biographies', 88% of respondents revealed their family as having a strong influence on their religious development. It quickly became apparent that many of these students were brought up within the confines of a practising Catholic environment where religious observance and promotion of the faith's traditions were normal day-to-day events:

Both my parents, my mother in particular was quite rigorous about her faith...I had that background. There are six in my family and it was all centred around going to Mass, you

know. We went to novenas and devotions and it was a very traditional Catholic upbringing.

My mum's family is a strong Catholic family. We always went to Mass as a family and we continue to do that now. My dad wasn't and he became a Catholic when I was young.... and I suppose if your dad is doing something like that it's a good example and model as well for you and even through to now...

My grandfather had a strong influence on me because he was a very faithful man and was just a person who had a wonderful faith and I think that that has really filtered on, and I think that it is a gift and I just hope you know, that I can continue it as best I can...

I've a strong family background...it would just be conversations with my parents that's helped me develop my faith and with family friends that are priests ..

For a very small minority, family was not a major source of influence in terms of faith development and, interestingly, this tended to be the case for students with parents of mixed faith:

I've got a kind of mixed background so em in the home I've got one parent Catholic and one parent is Protestant so because of that it wasn't a really, its not a very religious family.

My mum's side is Catholic and my dad's side is non-Catholic... my mum and gran have a lot of faith but they don't attend mass em my gran's side is Irish so I think that's why I was brought up [Catholic]..my mum and dad never enforced anything ...I didn't have to go to mass.... I just believed in God. That's all I knew about my religion when I was younger, I believed in God and that was it, I didn't believe in anything else.

Alongside family being mentioned by most as having a paramount influence, Catholic schooling also had significant effects on shaping faith, although not all of these were positive. 92% commented on Catholic schooling having contributed to making an impact on their faith and, of these, 25% went as far as to say that this was even stronger than their family's influence:

I suppose most of my faith though did come from school. There was a push towards masses and prayer. There was prayer at the start of every class.

Most of my input was from primary school.

It was certain teachers you know who gave you that faith, you know they would refer to it...just the way some were hopeful and trusting, 'Just put your trust in God and it will all work out' and all this kind of stuff...they would maybe make wee comments like that and they weren't RE teachers.

For others, the Catholic school did support or 'back up' what was being said and practised at home and the continuity between school and home was an influential element in itself.

When I experienced the loss of my dad the school chaplain went out of her way to take me out of class and see how I was doing. She was a sister and I'll always remember that.

I always felt that anything that was learned at home or in the parish was reinforced in school...I got a uniform message.

For a small minority of those interviewed (19%), the experience of Catholic Education at school was not always particularly positive and this will be discussed shortly.

A further point to note was that 69% of those interviewed highlighted the connection between home, parish and school when asked about the background to their faith development. Much has been written about the Catholic Church's view of the importance of the inclusion of all three elements in a child's education (for example, see Codd (2003); Prendergast (2003); Francis and Brown (1991)) stressing that the 'partnership between home, parish and school is the best setting for the development of maturing young people' (Bishops' Conference 2000: para3). It is considered that this 'triangle' is the bedrock for educational provision. Indeed, when asked about their faith development, the majority of those interviewed commented on how visible and influential these three elements were when growing up:

I've learned from my mum, from the school and em from my Church.

Faith development? I suppose through the school and I also liked being part of my local Church, being an altar boy, that kind of thing so partly that and my family as well.

From my parents primarily and from school to some extent, to a great extent I would say from school and from my local parish.

5.2.2 Self Perceptions

The Catholic student teachers were interviewed at the end of their various ITE programmes and so were in a position to reflect on the course they were about to complete and to consider the next stage of their teaching career. Whilst reflecting on this in conversation with the researcher, their self-perceptions as Catholic educators emerged as an area worthy of focus and within this, three particular aspects were considered to be of significance to this study. These were: the students' *role*, their *concerns* and their *past experiences*.

Role

All of the students were confident and clear when detailing what they believed to be their role as a Catholic teacher. The responses indicated an awareness of the Church's expectation of them; most notably they talked about being a witness to the faith, passing on the faith, helping children in their faith journeys and spreading the Gospel message—all familiar language of the Church:

I think it is very important to give children a faith, something to hold on to and to run in tandem with and to accommodate their spiritual life as well as their educational life.

Em to support children in their faith, to some extent. Unfortunately for a lot of children to initiate them in the faith or at least give them some contact with the Catholic Church which they may not have at home...lead them in daily prayer and hopefully pass on the teachings of the Catholic Church.

To teach the Gospel values through your teaching

Being a role model for the children in school., leading by example, letting them see you as a member of the Church.

To give more of a faith input rather than knowledge about the faith.

I see my role as being a representative of the faith

This apparent understanding of their role, and confidence in articulating it, is perhaps testimony to the input they received during their ITE course. However, only 58% of the students admitted feeling ready to carry out this responsibility and of these students an awareness of the enormity of the task was present.

You're a Catholic teacher. It's not a thirty-five hour week you're a Catholic teacher, it's non-stop like in everything you do.

Yeah. It's a bit scary but I feel more excited about doing it because it is a challenge...

Yeah but...I'm still learning...it's a little bit frightening that these kids are relying on you to learn their faith.

This was echoed by the remaining 42% who displayed a clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses in this aspect of their future careers and showed self-perception when identifying their needs. The strengths that students diagnosed tended to be concerned with their personal characteristics, talking about being witnesses to their faith in the manner in which they communicated through word and action.

I wouldn't say that I'm hugely versed on my faith or anything like that but the whole way you treat each other.. that will be the main thing that will come across in my own teaching.

I stopped going to mass myself and its only in the last couple of years, you know with family and everything, that I've started going back. I'm not the greatest Catholic in the world...but I'm an example...

As a Catholic teacher I can foster that ethos within schools, to be open, to be approachable.. to consider myself as a Catholic teacher before as an English teacher.

What was particularly noticeable was their declared commitment to their role as Catholic teachers along with their enthusiasm in this area. Other strengths identified were in relation to their faith backgrounds and what they themselves had learned as they grew up.

Concern

Conversely, a deep apprehension about their own knowledge in this area did arise as a concern for many of those interviewed. While feeling confident in their ability to promote Christian values and an appropriate ethos, it emerged that 39% worried about their competence in the transmission of accurate knowledge and about being questioned on aspects of the Catholic Church's teachings:

I think that there is a lot of knowledge that I still have to get you know....

I do feel that there are a lot of areas that I'm not quite sure about yet....I do feel sort of, I'm not particularly prepared in the RE element of the teaching.

The RE part is still quite daunting to go in and teach RE at the moment ...because it's outwith my subject area.... my area of expertise. In my last placement I was worried because we were doing a lot of work on the Old Testament and trying to get to grips with it and then going into class... but I'll just have to get on with it and stay one day ahead.

This concern relating to knowledge and understanding of the content of the curriculum and a fear of being asked difficult questions was a common occurrence, but some students had already identified methods of coping with this. One student commented on the confidence she had in the support network she had at home and in her parish if she required to seek advice. Some indicated a confidence in the school assisting them in terms of continuing professional development. Others mentioned the belief they had in the strength of their own faith in assisting them in succeeding in their career and indicated the importance of ensuring this was developed.

[I'll be fine] *as long as I'm keeping up with my own spiritual journey and doing my own reading ...*

Experience of RE and Catholic Education

Thornton et al, (2002) and Younger et al, (2004) have suggested that for many students, the decision to teach is as a result of their own positive experience of schooling. For a number of the students interviewed for this research, the choice to teach in the Catholic sector was *not* based on any positive or affirmative experience. Indeed, the religious dimension to their schooling was not always memorable:

I feel it wasn't really well taught in school, again I think that's very much dependent on the teacher, you know in school I thought that there was very much emphasis on the 'Catholics are right and everybody else is wrong' ... and I think probably that pushed me away from the faith rather than brought me to it.

It was a chore and was kind of frightening. Secondary school was just copying out the bible so although I was Catholic, I wasn't. I didn't really take my religion seriously then to be honest.

It [RE] was the period which we took registration.

It is clear then that although these negative experiences had an effect on the students, they did not deter them from entering the Catholic sector when embarking on a career in teaching. For some it resulted in a determination to contribute to the eradication of that kind of practice:

It will teach me to be very wary about the way of teaching Catholicism and religious education, it has to be very balanced teaching, and it has to allow children to wander....

I don't want to be that kind of teacher that just gives pupils bibles to copy out and just lecture to them about what happened in the gospels. I want to be like the kind of teacher I had one year, the kind that made it exciting...

It's important to note that all of the negative experiences recorded were directly related to *lessons*—that is, the content of the RE curriculum and the manner in which it was taught. However, the positive experiences documented by other students refer mainly to the *pastoral* nature of the school and the manner in which teachers related to pupils. Examples were given of the care and support of staff during periods of bereavement; encouraging pupils to use their talents to get involved in the religious services or teachers being available for chats where the advice given had its roots in the Christian faith and often included phrases such as 'Trust in God' or 'I'll remember you in my prayers'. While isolated instances

such as these can look trivial, cumulatively they can be powerful. Such accounts were frequently mentioned by respondents, commenting on how this ‘witness’ of teachers to the faith contributed to their own belief:

I've learned a lot you know..... what strength and support you can find in religion and even through school, knowing that you had someone to talk to, knowing that there was a priest or teacher that you could talk to, you think that they didn't have a clue because they didn't live your lifestyle but they did and they were good.

5.2.3 Expectations

Students were very clear as to what they would like to happen in terms of support once they embarked on their probationary year. Clear expectations were articulated about the continued development of their faith and how this should come about. *Faith development*, *collaboration* and *school support* emerged as subcategories worth discussing under the umbrella, ‘*expectations*’.

Faith Development

Respondents in this study were unanimous when indicating the need and desire for additional support in the area of faith development if they were to realise and fulfil their role as Catholic teachers. For many of them, the Catholic Teacher Formation component of the ITE course that they were completing had already contributed to their development and had whetted their appetites. Some were surprised at how much of a positive effect this had had on their faith and how they were looking forward to learning more and developing it further once in school.

I have found even the last part of the R.E. specialist course...has been really, really important in, in directing me and giving me reasons for things I really didn't know before.

It has strengthened my faith ...you have to make the commitment to it and it has committed me more towards my religion, definitely, or towards the faith, because I feel it sort of, I feel I have to, I want to know more about it.

I think for a lot of people on the course as well, it's renewed their faith, you know, it really has renewed their faith

Interviewees were unsure of the amount of support they would get, but all expected to get some.

Now that I have started I don't want to stop....it's something new to me, to be questioning myself so don't want to stop.

Collaboration

The discussions on this area revealed that the interviewees regarded faith development to be both a personal and yet collaborative activity of teachers. While appreciating that people have very different faith positions and biographies, and that personal and private reflection on faith is important for their work, 92% stressed the need for collaboration to take place when engaging in faith development.

It would be good if Catholic teachers were involved in it together... it links with the whole idea of being a reflective practitioner...what better atmosphere to do it in that with other Catholic teachers..

I would love to see it as a communal activity because I'm the type of person who really benefits from the support of other people...

You need to have your own personal faith but you also need support from other people.

You should be involved in it as a community but also.... Everyone's at their own stage so it's a personal journey as well.

School Support

Within the context of the probation year—on which all the interviewees would embark once they had completed and passed their course—there was a clear expectation from the majority of respondents that their school would provide support in terms of faith development for all staff. Interestingly, many spoke of this as though they were relying on it and were taking it for granted that this would be catered for in the Catholic school. 69% expected there to be formal Continuing Professional Development (CPD) structures in place to ensure that the faith of staff was being developed and monitored and that this would take the form of courses provided by the Local Authority, Glasgow University, the Diocese or from SCES.

Hopefully through CPD I will get more in development .. it's a big part of Catholic Education so I would expect it.

If you could have CPD courses and days to do with it then that would definitely help.

In addition to the formal activities expected to take place, assisting teachers in the development of their faith, all respondents expected there to be an informal undercurrent of support existing too. Those in the secondary sector expected this to come from the RE department in the school and many emphasised the role of

the chaplain in supporting them, or the assistance of the local parish. Others commented on the importance of the leadership in the school and how the head teacher should be there to help staff where necessary.

I hope support will come from within the school, like whatever head teacher I'm with, like she's supportive of her teachers or his teachers, developing them...

The overwhelming expectation of support for faith development was noteworthy and with this came a clear desire to respond to such activities and use them to help with the concerns or worries raised regarding their work as Catholic teachers.

5.2.4 Commentary

These interviews convey an alert analysis of student teachers' perception of what it means to them to be a Catholic teacher. The core category of *Considering the Journey Ahead* was chosen, since it accurately characterises and summarises the results of this first stage of interviews. Many respondents displayed a thoughtful understanding of the career upon which they were embarking and of the strengths and concerns that they had with regard to being effective Catholic educators. Most were clear as to what they wanted to achieve and had strong aspirations regarding the support they required to realise this. Their desire to succeed as effective faith educators was evident and their articulation of the enormity and importance of this task demonstrated how highly valued they consider their role to be.

Identity

It quickly emerged that 'identity' and 'background' became significant themes when discussing Catholic Education with the student teachers. A firm attachment to the Catholic community, an unequivocal belief that Catholic education is of value and worth, coupled with the majority's positive experience of Church, school and home are all indicative of the impact of religion in their formative years. The commitment to the Catholic tradition that is espoused here is pronounced, which in itself is revealing—if perhaps unsurprising when we appreciate the context in which the majority of the respondents find themselves. It is argued here that this commitment can be linked to the position and

importance of the Catholic Church in Scotland and its historical narrative. It is recognised that while this institutional Church may be universal, its profile in Scotland is somewhat different to that in any other country, including its neighbour, England (Boyle and Lynch 1998). Its continued and heightened position within the Scottish press and public discourse has ramifications for the present Catholic community, a community well aware of the treatment of some of its members' ancestors when they first arrived in Scotland. The concept of a 'ghettoised' community is often referred to by authors on the Irish/Catholic community in Scotland and although it is accepted that this is no longer the case and that the community has become socially mobile and integrated into Scottish society, the legacy of their struggle remains, resulting for many in a firm loyalty to the traditions of their faith (Conroy, 2001 & Devine 2000).

It would be hard to detach this narrative from the social biographies of those interviewed. Many indicated from an early stage that they were of Irish or Italian origin, while a large percentage communicated the strict and unflinching devotion of family members to their own faith and the transmission of this to their offspring. It can be said that while respondents' individual faith backgrounds differ quite considerably from one another in terms of their *response* to the faith input they received when growing up, the similarities for many in the input they did receive reveal a detectable loyalty and enduring adherence to the Catholic tradition.

It is not surprising, then, that some areas of recruitment have been relatively unproblematic when attempting to attract students to teach in the Catholic sector in Scotland. In an increasingly secular country, where religion and faith are regarded as 'un-cool', the number of students applying for the undergraduate course, to enable them to teach in the Catholic sector, is striking. Of course, the fact cannot be dismissed that, in gaining the Catholic Teachers' Certificate, new teachers will have the ability to teach in any school in Scotland, where non-Catholics will, for the most part, find themselves restricted to the nondenominational sector (this applies to all non-Catholic primary teachers). This will be attractive to many potential Catholic applicants and, of course, it is possible to place scepticism on students' feedback since environmental, career

factors and incentives may result in an outward conformity to certain norms and values. In general, teachers might adhere to certain things as a result of simple careerism and it is accepted that statements of principle and value are vulnerable to cynical interpretations that reduce them to a set of career aspirations. There is an awareness that evidence is susceptible to a range of interpretations, but there is enough salience in the data to suggest that certain kinds of interpretations are more valid than others. The purpose of this research is to try and see this from a phenomenological perspective—from the inside—investigating the inner motives and desires of the Catholic teacher. So while it might be suggested that students living in a late industrial polity such as Scotland see strategic advantages in entering the Catholic sector, there is nothing to suggest that the responses from the students involved in this study are insincere and it is considered that the instrumentation used by the researcher in order to gain this feedback was sufficiently sophisticated to get to the heart of people's motivations. Indeed, this part of the study suggests clearly that there exists a desire and willingness of students to contribute to Catholic Education, based on a firm belief in the value of their own personal biographies.

Differing Faith Backgrounds

Another theme emerging from these interviews was the difference in the response to faith backgrounds of the participants. Although the majority came from practising Catholic families, the difference in their understanding and experience of faith is quite significant. Some indicated being involved in the Church and being active members of related groups and were constantly engaged in faith discussions and activities. At the other end of the spectrum, some had not been attending Church since they left school and had just recently returned. Although it can be argued that Church attendance is not a prerequisite for an adequate knowledge and understanding of one's faith, it would be reasonable to argue that those regularly involved in the Catholic Church would have a deeper understanding of what it is to be Catholic and be more up-to date with Church developments and teachings. Therefore, the starting positions of these student Catholic teachers are very different and this is evident from the concerns and worries that some of them have articulated in terms of their own knowledge and understanding and experience of their faith.

Janssens (2004) examines this issue further in a paper that focuses on the Catholic educator teaching the official Doctrine of the Church. He discusses the concept of teachers' 'subjective theory' (p146) explaining that the teacher's previous experience—along with advice given by colleagues or knowledge received during the completion of their teacher education programme—is interpreted and reflected upon and 'interwoven' with personal assumptions and convictions (ibid). He claims that, 'every teacher has his [sic] own subjective theory, which may be similar to the subjective theory of colleagues, but which also certainly differs' (ibid:145). He also notes that few teachers are aware of their subjective theories unless they are suitably reflective. This, coupled with the teacher's view of their 'professional self', creates a 'personal frame of reference' through which individuals interpret and give meaning to all aspects of their work (ibid: 147). Within the context of Catholic education, it is recognised that the official doctrine of the Church may not be in line with teachers' personal frames of reference. Even among those who consider themselves to be committed and faithful members of the Church, very different thoughts on religion and faith can be found. Understandably, a lack of consistency between what one believes and what one teaches would prove hard to maintain.

Janssens (2004) also claims that individuals' frames of reference can change and be influenced by others. He illustrates this by highlighting how teachers in the same professional environment sometimes discuss and share views from their own frames of reference that can eventually result in shared frames of reference, which become a part of the organisational culture of the school. In terms of the transmission of Church teachings, this can have a positive or negative result depending on the views that become shared. Interestingly, 'school support' and 'collaboration' emerged as two main themes from this part of the study where respondents commented that they would be looking to others within their schools positively to support them and direct them in terms of their own faith development and, in turn, that of the children they teach. As the previous chapter has highlighted, there are concerns about this from school leaders, particularly with regard to issues of sensitivity regarding what is considered *professional* development as opposed to something that may be considered private and

personal. The results of the later stages of data collection consider the role of the school and its staff in the development of teachers' faith.

Even though all of those interviewed espoused a firm commitment to Catholic education, students involved in this study have had different faith and life experiences which will have ultimately shaped their views and contributed to their personal frames of reference. This has implications for the consistency in the teaching of RE and the promotion of faith across the sector.

Self-perceptions

The clear articulation and understanding of what respondents believe their role to be as a Catholic teacher, is striking. The vocabulary used was indicative of a firm knowledge of the Church's expectation of them and although they accepted and appreciated the responsibility placed on them, not all felt ready to carry out such a task.

It has been claimed that those who are confident in their own position and their views/beliefs about teaching (not necessarily confined to those which are religious) will be more likely to experience satisfaction in their teacher role and even act as change agents in their classroom (Renzaglia, Hutchins & Lee, 1997). It is considered that those who are lacking in confidence tend to be less reflective and enter the teaching profession with a utilitarian focus, being concerned only with 'being able to do' the job (Goodlad, 1990: 225), which primarily means maintaining classroom discipline and focusing simply on strategies and techniques for effective classroom instruction (Stuart & Thurlow 2000). At this early stage in the presentation of results, two categories of participants were emerging. These were those who were *faith-confident* and those who were *faith-insecure*. The former category is characterised by those who were looking forward to the challenge of being a Catholic teacher; knew their strengths and were motivated to improve their weaknesses; were involved in the Church or faith related activities and who had networks of support in place (family, friends, priests). Those belonging to the *faith-insecure* category, whilst confident in articulating their role as a Catholic teacher, were much more concerned with aspects of their role; some had admitted not having attended Church until very

recently; did not have the same support networks in place and were unsure as to where to find them.

It is very clear that those interviewed place pressure on themselves to be effective Catholic teachers. While most interviewees spoke positively about their faith background, a minority articulated a less than satisfactory experience. When referring to their religious development, or lack of it, rarely the family or parish was criticised—rather, it was the Catholic school. As former pupils of the Catholic sector, reflecting on their faith, there was for some the realisation that the school had *not* fulfilled its mission in effectively supporting and developing their faith, sometimes quite the opposite. This aggrieved some respondents, indicating their expectation that the Catholic school ought to have achieved this. The effect of this is that they have put pressure on themselves to ensure that they carry out their role effectively. What is noticeable, however, is that the negative experiences from their own education in the Catholic school always appear connected to the *content* of the RE lessons. Some remembered RE being a waste of time due to teachers' incompetence and others were critical of the knowledge - or rather lack of it - they received during these lessons. Interestingly, when we turn to the concerns that these student teachers have articulated regarding their *own* ability to be effective Catholic teachers, again these are nearly always to do with their knowledge base or understanding of Church teachings, and how to communicate this competently to children. It appears that a thorough knowledge and understanding of the RE curriculum in Catholic schools is something in which Catholic teachers require continued support (and perhaps should have had in the past). Without exception, all of the student teachers praised the level of support they had received during their ITE studies in the area of Religious Education and Catholic Teacher Development but for some and, in particular, those on the one-year professional graduate course, this had only given them a foundation on which to build and there was clear recognition that further development was essential.

Where the negative experiences of their own Catholic education were concerned with the content of the RE curriculum, the positive experiences were related to the pastoral nature and ethos of the school. The accounts of the supportive

teachers, the Christian vocabulary used when working with their classes, the witness to faith in word and action, in addition to experiences of prayer and worship, were examples of positive formative faith experiences and, again, this seemed to be the area to which the majority of respondents themselves feel ready and able to contribute. For many, the support networks at home, and from their parish, are considered to be of value in supporting them in this area.

This stage of the study has revealed that there are two related yet different aspects to the role of the Catholic teacher as identified by the respondents. One appears to be the imparting of information and knowledge and assisting the children in the understanding of Catholic Church teaching through RE lessons. The other is the pastoral role of the teacher, the day-to-day interaction with the children and staff and the promotion of the Catholic faith throughout. The Church itself stresses that RE in the Catholic school is not confined to the RE class but rather it should permeate the life and ethos of the school (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education 1977: para 50). Nevertheless, when identifying concerns and areas for support and development, many of the student teachers have diagnosed a lack of knowledge in the subject area of Religious Education and feel more confident in contributing to the faith ethos of the school by their words and actions—being a witness to their faith—throughout the school day.

The previous chapter revealed some head teachers' perceptions of newly qualified staff—that they enter the Catholic teaching profession without the same background knowledge in their faith that teachers had in past generations. The interviews conducted for this particular part of the study suggest that indeed this *is* the case and that Catholic students' concern about their knowledge and understanding of their faith and of Church teachings is indeed a live issue. Robinson (2002) draws attention to the gap of knowledge base of current Catholic Church members and explains that the reason for this is that, among other things, they were 'born of a swing from a traditional catechism-based approach of rote learning to a post-Vatican II emphasis on person experience and faith journeys often not rooted in any connection to theology' (p144). This, she claims, has resulted in students embarking on a career in Religious Education

with little explicit understanding of their own faith, even if they have come from practising Catholic backgrounds or are products of a Catholic school system.

For these student teachers, there was a realisation that their knowledge was an area in need of development, but there also existed an expectation that the CPD they would receive once qualified, would assist with this.

Continuing Professional Development

The students' expectation of development in the area of their own faith, and knowledge and understanding of it, is significant. Without exception, all expressed a need and desire for support in this area and although unaware of how this would come about, they were relying on it to assist them in their work. Different kinds of support were suggested, ranging from retreats to attending courses, but all of them recognised this to be part of their continuing *professional* development and something in which staff should engage together. According to respondents, the development of faith required two elements—an increase in knowledge and understanding and the opportunity for spiritual/prayer experiences. As already highlighted, the majority indicated that this should be formalised, yet all expected an informal constant source of support from their school. What is revealing here is the expectation of the leadership of the schools in which they will find themselves. The assumption that Catholic head teachers ensure that faith development of staff is a school's priority is idealistic, as the last chapter has already illustrated. Indeed, the Church has stressed the importance of the provision of faith development for Catholic teachers that, according to the Church, must aim to 'animate them as witnesses of Christ in the classroom and tackle the problems of their particular apostolate' (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education 1977:para78). However, the commitment of Scotland's Catholic school leaders to the continued faith development of their teachers has already been questioned in the previous chapter and it has been argued that the different agendas driving CPD in Scotland have resulted in school leaders responding to the demands placed on them by the Government at the expense of focusing on aspects of the faith nature of their school.

These student teachers are well aware of their strengths and weaknesses in relation to their role as Catholic teachers and have identified the areas requiring development at this early stage. Based on the findings from Chapter Four, they appear to be unrealistic in their expectations of the level of support they will receive from the school. Nevertheless, these expectations are consistent with Church documentation that stresses the importance of their role as Catholic teachers and directs them to seek support and development in this aspect of their work (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education 1977: para78-80).

5.3 Stage two – From Theory to Practice

‘Those within education whose own formation has involved the acquisition of spiritual capital do not act simply as professionals but as professionals and witnesses’

(Grace 2002: 236)

In recent years, it has been suggested that increased attention deserves to be given to the induction of new teachers, as they embark on their probationary period in school (Turner 1994; Stuart & Thurlow 2000). Claims of ‘being thrown in at the deep end’ (Turner 1994:326) or reports that undergraduate education programmes inadequately prepare newly qualified teachers to face the demands of the classroom and of the school (Stuart & Thurlow 2000) have been concerns heralded quite often by new teachers themselves or other members of the profession charged with the responsibility of supporting a new generation of teaching staff. However substantiated or indeed unfounded these claims may be, it could be argued that, in Scotland, the McCrone agreement has responded positively to such concerns by radically changing the process of induction for newly qualified teachers. A *Teacher Induction Scheme* (TIS) has been introduced that bears little resemblance to that of the previous probationary period, since it appears to have a much clearer structure with a focus on satisfying the *Standard for Full Registration* (SFR). The General Teaching Council of Scotland (GTCS) is responsible for the administration of the scheme in partnership with the Scottish Government Education Department. The scheme guarantees a one-year

placement to every eligible student graduating with a teaching qualification from a Scottish university. Within that year there are four key elements that must be undertaken and satisfied if students are to achieve the Standard for Full Registration. These are: teaching, support meetings, observed sessions and continuing professional development. The time given to CPD is 0.3 FTE and the remaining 0.7 FTE is allocated for the other key elements (GTCS, 2007). Successful completion of this one-year period of probation will grant probationers full registration into the Scottish teaching profession. For the purpose of this research, the second stage of data collection took place four months after participants commenced their first teaching post as newly qualified teachers and working within this scheme.

It must be noted at this point that a commitment is made by Scottish local authorities to try to place probationers holding the Catholic Teachers' Certificate in Catholic schools but, for 23% of those interviewed for the purposes of this study, this was not the case. These teachers—all of whom were approved to teach in the Catholic sector and had achieved the appropriate qualification to do so—were placed (against their wishes) in the nondenominational sector for their probationary period. The remaining 77% of teachers were placed in Catholic schools.

Of the twenty-six student teachers interviewed for the first stage of data collection, twenty-one participated in this second stage. The reduction in number was due to four participants withdrawing from the research (for reasons unknown to the researcher) and one postponing her career in the teaching profession, for reasons of health. The remaining twenty-two were interviewed for a second time.

The theory evolving from the first round of interviews influenced the design of the interview schedule for this second stage in the research. The analysis of these new interviews generated three main categories, two of which had emerged as concepts from the interrogation of the first stage of data collection and had been considered worthy of further development. The three main categories are:

- *the Catholic teacher's role*
- *faith development: knowledge and experience* and,
- *impact of leadership*

These categories each contain discrete concepts (see *Figure 5.2*) and have contributed to establishing the core category for this stage in the research namely, '*From Theory to Practice*'. It is felt that this title accurately depicts the results from this round of interviews, owing to participants becoming more familiar with the reality of teaching and the day-to-day practicalities of working in the Catholic school. Exploration of each of the main categories in turn will evidence this further.

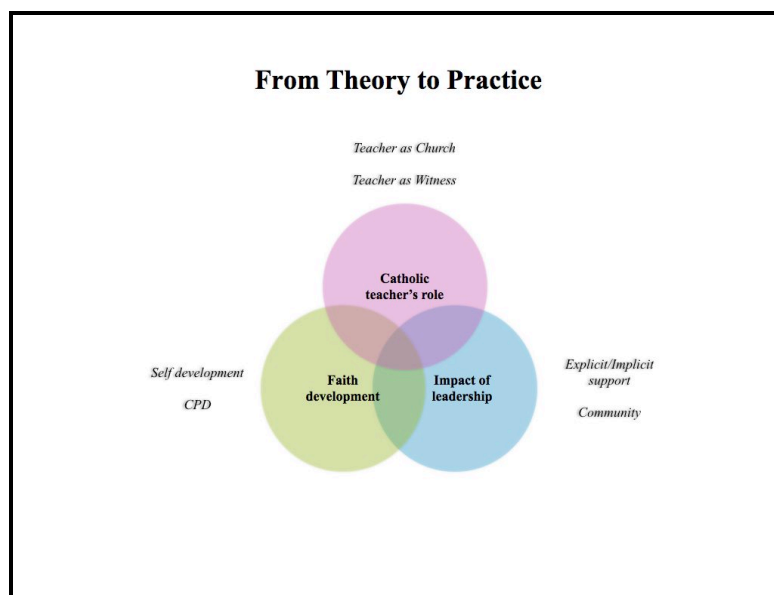


Figure 5.2 Stage Two: Key Categories and their Concepts

5.3.1 Role

The first main category to emerge was that of the Catholic teacher's *role*. This was highlighted in the first round as something worthy of investigation and the analysis of the second round of interviews resulted in it being developed into a main theme.

Of those participants placed in a Catholic school, 69% commented on how their understanding of their role as a Catholic teacher had either changed or developed since commencing their first teaching position.

My understanding is the same but there is certainly a lot more meat on the bones, if you like, than as to what I had imagined it would be like. So ...it has improved for the better I would say. [Paul]

[My understanding of the role] has totally just widened expectations of what you thought, you know it's hard to describe, but I don't think I realised how big a role you play in the children's lives. [Patricia]

I realise now how important it is... it's a big responsibility to teach them the doctrine but also how to apply it and stuff so it's a big responsibility even more like example wise as well. I've got to look at myself first. [Joseph]

[My understanding] has deepened...I'm really conscious of the Catholic environment in this school...[Mary]

I have a more in-depth understanding.... I should be part of the pastoral role of the pupils as well and not just obviously teaching my subject. [Jane]

The teachers commented that the reason for this development in their understanding was as a result of the prolonged experience in the Catholic school environment. Previous placements had occurred during their ITE courses and lasted for a *maximum* of ten weeks and although this was considered adequate for the purpose of gaining sufficient experience to successfully complete the course, it was recognised that full appreciation of the expectation of the teacher—and indeed of his or her role as Catholic educator—had not occurred until participants commenced their full-time posts.

When you're a student you are in for ten weeks or five weeks or whatever it is and then you're away.. [Joseph]

It's [the role of the Catholic teacher] more involved and actually it sounds awful but when you were doing your placements you knew it was just six weeks...so you knew at the end of the six weeks you just left and got on and you didn't really need to worry. And now you know you are a permanent thing in these kids' lives for a year so you are more involved and actually make the effort. It's not like on placement when you did things to be seen to be doing them... you actually say, 'I'll do this because it is good for the kids', it's not making me look good it's for the good of other people...it's a bit less selfish really [now] that you got a permanent job. [Marie]

There is a noticeable change in the language used by these teachers when defining their role as a Catholic educator. The first section in this chapter discussed the very *Catholic* language respondents used to define their role, when they were pre-service teachers. Often paraphrases from Church documentation and related literature were recited, illustrating their knowledge of what was expected of them. While this could be viewed as positive, and indeed would be

considered a desirable outcome by those responsible for teaching the RE component of their courses (which incorporates the Catholic Teachers' Certificate), the much less formalised, yet ease and fluidity of language used at this stage, coupled with the depth of response when discussing their role, indicate that the experience of being in the Catholic school for a prolonged period of time has allowed these respondents to consider their position from a much more practical and realistic perspective. This demonstrates not only a *knowledge* of what is expected of them but an *understanding* of why this is the case. The interviews indicate that much of this has been based on personal reflection.

It's about trying to get the balance right. You're faced with it even more now the fact that you are with children whose circumstances aren't you know, what you think, you are trying to deal with children who don't go to Mass, who don't or aren't encouraged to go to Mass and people who are maybe from split families and things and as a student you don't realise things..... You really have to be careful not to offend. [Helen]

It's quite obvious from all the kids in this class that they need help like with other issues and they need somebody just there to listen to them...somebody that they can trust. I've got more of a greater awareness that there should be someone there...every teacher should take a pastoral role. [Jane]

This complements the findings of a variety of research reports that suggest pre-service teachers' beliefs about their role are primarily based on what has been learned from educational literature or from other intellectual roots that have nourished them as they have developed (Stuart & Thurlow 2000). For these respondents, at this new stage in their careers, the deeper understanding and recognition of what they now perceive their role to be, presented them with additional challenges.

Teacher as 'Church'

Referring to the work of Michael Paul Gallagher SJ, Jim Gallagher (1996) has illustrated that while, worldwide, there are young people committed to, and indeed hostile towards, concepts of faith and religion, there is evidence to suggest that the vast majority of young people are 'untouched' by either (p293). Greater attention to the evangelical role of the Catholic teacher is therefore called for, and the manner in which the school presents itself as Church (Gallagher, 1996). The Roman Catholic Church has, in recent years, stressed the ecclesial identity of the Catholic school, commenting that it is truly 'at the heart of the

Church' (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997: para 11). In explaining this, it highlights the changing nature of society and in turn of Catholic schools where, increasingly, many of the children attending are pupils who 'shun effort, are incapable of self-sacrifice and perseverance and who lack authentic models to guide them, often in their own families' (ibid: para 6). The Church instructs the Catholic school and its staff to respond to this change by recognising itself as a 'genuine instrument of the Church' (ibid:para11) where pastoral ministry should be lived and evangelisation should be taking place. It recognises that children can be non-practising, indifferent and lacking in any faith or religious formation. The Catholic teacher's role in presenting the Church to these children who enter Catholic schools, then is challenging. Indeed, Cunnane (2004) comments that this view places an 'unwarranted burden' on the teacher and 'excludes others from the [religious education] conversation' (p18). Gallagher (1996) stresses that the teacher's *relationship* with such pupils is more important than any theological content he or she may offer. This, he claims, makes 'personal demands' on teachers and in this area they require support (ibid: 296).

Those interviewed for the purpose of this research, echoed the Church's view when they were asked what they considered their role to be. In their own words and based on their experience in the school, over 50% commented on the evangelical nature of their role where they are *introducing* children to the Church—and indeed to the Word of God—and being a living experience of it rather than developing an existing faith. This is a significant shift from the first round of interviews. As can be seen from Stage 1 results, prior to qualifying as Catholic teachers, they spoke of their role as being 'educators in the faith' or helping children on their own faith journeys by developing their knowledge and providing experiences. While this is still considered important at this stage in their careers, the realisation that they are having to *evangelise*—that is *introduce* children to the message of Christ through the Gospel and ultimately to the Catholic faith—is new. Morris (1998) has claimed that 'in practice, since for some pupils initial evangelisation may not have taken place, catechesis may involve not only nourishing and teaching the faith but also arousing it' (p97). Bollan (2007) ventures further, arguing that the context of faith development for

children has shifted from the family and parish to the school, so much so that the ‘future of the Church passes by way of its schools’ (p13). This was very quickly realised by the probationers and of genuine surprise to some respondents, particularly in relation to the lack of faith background and Mass attendance of many of the children they were teaching and of the children’s ignorance of central features of the Catholic faith.

The majority of children are not attending Mass [Paul]

It’s hard to bring religion in because they don’t really take it seriously. They don’t see it in the house. [Diane]

You are trying to deal with children who don’t go to Mass, who aren’t encouraged to go to Mass and people who are maybe from split families and things that as a student you don’t really see.... [Helen]

Most of my children don’t attend....I have even more of a responsibility to teach these children what it is actually about and this takes more time with them.. [Julie]

It can be quite a challenge.....many of them don’t go to Mass. [Andrew]

Laura, teaching an infant class in a school in one of the most deprived areas in the UK, explained how challenging she considered her role to be owing to the lack of spiritual guidance in the children’s life outwith the school environment.

I find it quite hard in here because, em none of them know anything at all, they don’t, nobody goes to chapel.... They don’t understand anything, they don’t understand the meaning, they call the priest ‘Mr’ Hendy, d’you know, just things like that so I find it quite difficult. It’s like starting from scratch with them.

Literature from the Church reveals that it too recognises this challenge for the Catholic teacher. It has stressed that its schools are for *all* children, but that traditionally it has given ‘special attention to those who are weakest’ (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997: para15). This phrase initially referred to children who were socially and financially disadvantaged but the Church has expressed concern about new forms of poverty that are now a challenge to the Catholic school. This is understood as ‘spiritual poverty’ which the Church claims can be found, ‘among those who have lost all sense of meaning in life and lack any type of inspiring ideal, those to whom no values are proposed and who do not know the beauty of faith, who come from families which are broken and incapable of love, often living in situations of material and spiritual poverty, slaves to the new idols of society’ (ibid: para 15). A concern

for the social and spiritual welfare of children in this context is therefore strongly emphasised.

Many of the teachers interviewed for this study have revealed this as being a very live issue as they embark on their career in teaching. Their response to the dearth of faith or spiritual formation in some of the children's lives was illustrative of the position of the institutional Church on this matter; that is, that the teachers view themselves as 'Church' for the children and appreciate that, for many, they will most likely be the only experience of Church that their pupils will receive. The enormity of this task was recognised.

I feel more responsible now than I ever did. [Helen]

Teacher as 'Witness'

In responding to this deeper understanding of their role, those teachers placed in the Catholic sector detailed how they were carrying this out. 73% spoke of the realisation that that they were trying to be an example to the children in terms of faith. Phrases such as 'leading by example' and 'living my faith' were given, phrases very much aligned to the view of the Church that the Catholic teacher should be a *witness* to the Catholic faith (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982). This concept is regularly referred to by those concerned with Catholic education or indeed by scholars writing about this particular field of study. Within this context, the term 'witness' is taken to mean teachers expressing their own Catholic faith in what they say and do, so that 'children can see the precepts of Christian life displayed and acted out in normal daily routines' (Morris 1998:100).

Francesca, a NQT placed in an inner-city Glasgow Catholic primary school commented,

You are leading by example and you are showing the children that you live your life as a Christian, a Catholic and em bringing into to that what you do at the weekend and part of that is going to Mass and talking about that. You are there to be a role model and so really it has to come through.

Joseph, teaching in a very different primary school in a village in East Dunbartonshire echoed this sentiment.

I like to share my own experiences as well and I've been finding that that really helped and especially even silly things like bringing in my certificate from my communion and confirmation and it has really helped them.

Helen, another primary teacher, highlighted that for her it is important not to be hypocritical:

The way you talk to them, the way you treat them, the way you deal with them the way you know you make them feel, you know, you know by looking at a child if they are happy. You can't ask them to do something you are not doing it yourself.

Interestingly, it was the primary school teachers who were much more confident in giving concrete examples of how they were being 'witnesses' for the children at this early stage in their careers. This is perhaps unsurprising since they are working with the same children on a day-to-day basis and, within the school, they are themselves directly responsible for the children's entire education. Secondary teachers do not experience that same concentrated time with classes of children, which, understandably, may allow for different teacher-pupil relationships and class-based faith opportunities to emerge. Nevertheless, there were among secondary staff some very solid explanations of the role of the teacher and again these tied in with this very Catholic concept of teacher as 'witness'. One commented,

I have a tutor group and we always start off the tutor group with a prayer but I also ask them for special intentions.... And they have started to be a lot more forthcoming at first they wanted to hurry up and get it over with but now they are starting to... they have lots of requests.....I've got the enthusiasm , I really do want to pass it on and let them see the value of having a faith [Gemma]

It is routinely claimed in professional literature that in order effectively to promote a set of values they must be owned and practised by the professional, since no one can pass on beliefs or values they do not hold themselves (Lewis, 1946; Groome, 2003). Teachers have the ability to be very influential in the lives of those they teach and the promotion of their own values and beliefs contributes to that. Groome (2003) explains that when teachers allow their faith commitments to shape the implementation of the curriculum, then what is taking place is 'faith at work' and at its foundation is their own spirituality. Indeed, Groome supports the view that teachers are powerful agents of influence in

Children's lives and argues that 'the heart of education is the heart of the educator' (p35). He draws a distinction between talking about aspects of faith and living it:

If we are to move beyond pious rhetoric, then spirituality must permeate the whole curriculum of Catholic education – what and why, how and who we teach. In gist, it invites teachers to bring their own souls and their heart's core convictions in faith to the teaching task, and likewise that they engage the souls of their students, reaching into their deep heart's core as persons. (ibid: 40)

He continues by suggesting that educators can do this without necessarily using a lot of 'god-talk' and illustrates this by referring to one of his own school teachers who, 'rarely mentioned God when teaching history, and yet he likely taught us more than the religion teachers about living out faith' (ibid: 41). This teacher, he explains, did not preach to Groome and his classmates, but they had no doubt about what mattered to this teacher or what were his values and commitments. Groome claims, 'in a word, he shared his soul with us. Every good teacher does as much' (ibid: 41). Many of the probationers interviewed as a part of this study indicated that they believe this concept of 'witness' to be an important aspect of their role and one that they are even more aware of now that they have been in a Catholic school for a prolonged period of time.

For those teachers placed in the nondenominational sector for their probationary period, being a 'witness' to their faith or 'leading by example' was also a concept that came through as being important, albeit in a non-Catholic environment. Ed, a Catholic primary school teacher placed in a nondenominational school in a large town in the West of Scotland, spoke of promoting his Christian values in his class.

Even though it is nondenominational, the sort of Catholic ethos that you see in Catholic primaries you are trying to bring across here without saying 'Catholic'. Sort of just Christian values and Christian attitude that we are all in this together, we are all here to help each other, reinforcing this as a unit. Em, we're all here to help, we've got to look at ourselves as an extended family. All this aspect of it. I'm pushing that.

Brenda supported this view and explained that she considers aspects of her role to be the same as it would be in the Catholic sector;

I think that in the nondenominational sector there is still a need for pastoral, not pastoral care that's quite a religious term but more just the whole kinda caring, sharing

ethos that's involved. More just the whole caring aspect of how you would see yourself in a Catholic school, you have to then transfer that to a nondenominational school so I do see that I have the same role but obviously I can't like label it. ... you hope that you are portraying a Christian outlook and you're a 'Christian' teacher as opposed to bracketing you into a 'Catholic' teacher.

For the others placed in this sector, they explained that promoting values, based on their Catholic faith, could be done in a very implicit manner, although some did comment that they could not be as effective in this role as they imagined they would have the potential to be, if placed in the Catholic sector. Eileen, a secondary school Modern Studies teacher commented,

Showing respect to people, you know, being caring and things like that, THAT doesn't change. I've not changed as a teacher. But, definitely in that you know, I wouldn't openly discuss that I am a Catholic in this school. I wouldn't make it open here.

She continues by explaining why she would always opt to teach in the Catholic sector and her aspiration to do so after the probationary period.

If I was given the choice I would still pick the Catholic school.... just because that's what I'm used to and I feel as if you're not hiding anything.

The concept of probationer teachers promoting Christian or 'Catholic' values in a non-Christian setting raises interesting questions. The recorded accounts of adhering to particular sets of values and attempting to share or transmit these within non-Catholic work environments could be considered as a violation of one's position; particularly when taking into consideration the choices of parents to send their children to a school where such infiltration of particular views and values would not be expected or, indeed, desired. It is worth noting, however, that the majority of teachers placed in the nondenominational sector referred to their actions in relation to their own identity, rather than to any deliberate attempt to evangelise in these non-Catholic environments.

'Witness' therefore was a concept that emerged very strongly as something that these new teachers valued highly, regardless of the environment in which they found themselves. Those in the Catholic sector exhibited a stronger belief in, and deeper understanding of, what it means to be a 'witness' compared with the view they had of this when they were students. This was recognised as being a challenge and something that required to be taken seriously. For those in the nondenominational sector, promoting and living values based on their faith was

something that they *all* believed was important, even though some were unhappy with the extent to which they could be open about their faith and beliefs.

5.3.2 Faith Development

Without exception, every single teacher participating in this research echoed the sentiment that had emerged from the first round of interviews, stressing the need to continue developing their faith, and in doing so they highlighted why they felt that this would be beneficial to them and what form this kind of CPD should take. There were strong responses about the importance of such development. Patrick commented;

If I were not to do something then I'd be kidding on about being a Catholic teacher.

Patricia echoed this view:

If you are not developing it yourself there's no possible way you can influence the children that you're teaching.

Marie, Gemma and Paul commented on how faith development is important in nourishing them spiritually as teachers, which they believe will help them with their work;

I think it is important to get a kind of sustenance and a new way of looking at things or even just revisiting things you have previously but I don't think that you can stand still really, you know, you've got to be continually enriched in what you believe, finding out more and also trying to make sense of the word in religious terms as things change, as teaching changes, as you get in quite challenging pupils em, to try and see the face of God on them despite the fact that they make your life as difficult as possible [laughs]. [Paul]

I think it [faith development] is crucial because when you are waning in it, when you are sort of waning in your faith or if you are going through a wee sort of dip in your faith then its really hard to be enthusiastic about it and to pass it on.[Gemma]

I think that in relation to teaching I think you need something that you can, you have inside you that you can rely on because you can get bogged down so easily. You know, its horrible sometimes, you are sitting there going 'oh this is awful' but you've got something that you get support from out-with just having a rant or having a drink! It's important to develop it I think for your own sanity more than anything. [Maria]

This desire for faith development was unanimous—including those placed in the nondenominational sector—although some respondents indicated other issues that were of immediate concern;

It's something I want to develop. First of all I'll get probation out of the way and then carry it on later. [Diane]

I don't think that I can honestly work as a Catholic teacher, within a Catholic school system, and carry out what I see as my role as a Catholic teacher, without developing myself... It's just that there's so many things going on. I don't feel as though I've really kinda changed very much in the last year in terms of faith. [Mary]

This last comment made by Mary, an English teacher placed in a large Catholic secondary school, indicates her desire to develop her faith but reveals how circumstances have affected the time she has given to this. Mary is not alone in her suggestion that time should be given to the consideration of faith. Earl (2007) has acknowledged this 'desire' among Catholic teachers in the United States and, in her study and analysis of the impact of a series of spirituality seminars for Catholic teachers, she revealed the positive impact that such activities had on school staff; on their understanding of the mission and purpose of the Catholic school and on their ability to incorporate this into their work on a day-to-day basis. Mary's contemporaries were invited to share their own position with regard to this.

Faith-Self development

The newly qualified teachers interviewed for the purpose of this research were asked about their own faith position and if they had sought to develop this since they had commenced teaching. Of those responding, 38% revealed that they were not doing anything differently from when they were first interviewed and again the main example given for a faith development activity was Mass attendance. Three teachers—who had admitted returning to the Church and going to Mass as a result of their ITE courses—explained that that they were *still* attending Church regularly and were happy that they were continuing to make the effort to do so. A very small percentage (9%) explained that they felt that their faith was not as strong as it had been and this, they believe, is as a result of commencing their first teaching post. One teacher, who had emerged from the first round of interviews as being, according to him, particularly strong in his faith, by praying regularly and attending Mass whenever he could, spoke of his concern that this was falling by the wayside.

It's kinda gone downhill because I've been so busy but I'm kinda conscious of the fact that I really need to do something because work has overtaken my life so much... I'm not putting in the same effort I used to. [Patrick]

This teacher also admitted to struggling with his job and spoke of the relentless tiredness he was experiencing since '*taking on the burden of teaching*'. This, he believed, was having an impact on his faith and so Sunday Mass attendance was all he felt he was now doing in terms of faith development. A second teacher, placed in the nondenominational sector, spoke of how she had lapsed in terms of attending Mass on a Sunday and this, she believed, had a direct correlation to being placed in a non-Catholic school.

At Uni I had to think of my own faith and think of my own thoughts and beliefs and even then I was going back to Mass because I was doing the certificate but now that I've come here, I haven't been going... If I was in a Catholic school I would definitely make sure I would make a point of going to Mass...I would make that effort to go because I think that is part of the job and that's part of what you teach and also I did enjoy being back again but being here I don't think its as important. [Sarah]

Interestingly, one of the other teachers placed in the nondenominational school, commented that he was much more conscious about attending Mass and made a concerted effort to do so since he felt that he was missing out because he was not '*dealing with it [faith] every day*'.

The remaining 53% of teachers believed that they had actively sought to develop their faith since starting teaching. With one exception, each of these teachers indicated a direct correlation between this and working in a Catholic environment.

I have. I've tried. I've really tried to read more, just even silly things like being more familiar with the saints. I then make a point of telling them why the saints are there. I've also tried to go to confession more because I fell I need it! [Helen]

Through teaching the religious education programme and getting married in the Catholic Church I have developed my faith more and I am a much stronger Catholic now than I was ..before I started teaching. [Eileen]

I've been going to the Mass at lunchtimes and things like that..., there's one every Thursday, so I've been trying to get to that as often as I can. [Jane]

The structure of prayer, you know in the morning or at lunch time, you know before and after lunch and at night. That I think gives you a better grounding you know in the sense that there are certain times of the day when you are praying. [Paul]

Marie explained how much easier it was to be aware of faith and to consider developing it, now that she was teaching in a Catholic school where faith was promoted.

You know you don't need to have to go trekking down the road to find yourself a priest to go mass, or it's actually all there for you I suppose maybe if you think about it, when you, if you're quite lazy about the whole thing, so now it's actually put in front of you and you go oh right this is fine. I'm actually, I was lazy but now it's easy to be involved. And that's the sort of, nice thing, you forget how easy it was to be involved and how it's not a trial...you are actually taking part, it's nice, it's community involvement.

These teachers revealed then that working in a Catholic school had a direct influence on their faith in terms of their prayer life, intensity of belief, experience of faith through mass attendance and a desire to engage more in the sacramental and liturgical life of the school.

Formal faith formation CPD

The current situation in schools was investigated to establish the status quo for Catholic teachers regarding organised or formalised CPD for the purpose of faith development.

Of those teaching in the Catholic sector, 76% revealed that there had been no mention of CPD for the purpose of faith development in their schools, or they themselves had not actively sought such opportunities. Many commented that this was not a priority of their school. The formal CPD opportunities available to them, and those that they were encouraged to undertake during their 0.3 FTE 'McCrone' development time, tended to be concerned with their subject area or the school priorities other than the Catholic dimension of the school. When asked if she was aware of CPD opportunities in this area, Diane was clear about her own experience;

I am not aware of anything, no, nothing has really been said.

Andrew, a secondary school science teacher had a similar experience,

So far everything has just been kinda focused on either science or physics developments. There is nothing [CPD opportunities for faith development] that I am aware of.

Other comments regarding the formal CPD faith development opportunities available to teachers included:

I haven't been made aware of anything and to be honest I haven't looked for anything myself. [Mary]

There's been nothing. I've been going on a lot of courses uhu but I think it's probably because I've not got an RE class this year so I've not really had much contact with the head of RE. [Jane]

'Priority' was given as the main reason for this experience, where the probationers spoke of trying to get to grips with the essential aspects of teaching in the first few months of their career, in order to simply survive.

I would have to admit that I'm not particularly aware [of CPD opportunities concerned with faith development] but that is probably because I haven't tried to seek that out yet. I'm just finding my way with everything else. [Francesca]

It is important to note that the newly qualified teachers here are referring to official or *formal* continuing development opportunities for the development of faith. As already highlighted, some *informal* experiences within their workplace had an effect on their faith and its development, and these will be discussed in more detail in the next section. Indeed, there is a common distinction in Scotland regarding formal and informal CPD experiences (SEED, 2001).

The remaining 24% of teachers placed in the Catholic sector—and interviewed as part of this study—explained that they *had* received or been made aware of CPD opportunities for the purpose of faith development. Their experiences were quite different from those above since they displayed some knowledge of various courses or opportunities available to them owing to them having been 'flagged up' and some had even been actively encouraged to attend or participate. For two of these teachers it was simply an awareness of opportunities:

We were at an RE course about six weeks or so ago, it was at the diocesan centre, so up until that point, I hadn't been aware but I am now. You know, I am now aware there are a number of courses available. [Paul]

I haven't been made aware of a lot. I am aware that they are there but religious elements haven't been pointed out to me in particular. [Helen]

For others, however, there had been an uptake of various CPD activities on offer. Julie explained,

I've had specific input on the Confirmation which is good and although it was going over the programme it was also looking at your own understanding of confirmation and like all of the sacraments and stuff.

Gemma spoke of her satisfaction at having opportunities of this nature available to her:

Just last Friday we were at a staff retreat which was fantastic. It was an inset day with the school and all the staff were invited if they wanted to go to a retreat up to Dunblane Church house and it was really good. I really did enjoy that. About 16 of us went up and it was a bonding experience as well and the time of year it was lovely as well. I did feel as though it was kinda preparing and getting me excited about the nativity and all that so it was good.

She continued by explaining how she has been proactive in seeking CPD opportunities that support her faith.

I went to the CPD course on Faith and Learning, it was good learning but it was the 'Challenges of Faith for Today's Youth' with Fr. Michael Paul Gallagher, that's right, I thought that was great as well I really enjoyed that day and em, I'd actually saw that poster up in the Uni before I left and I thought, 'God that looks great' and I took a wee note of it and I had it in my diary so when I started here I put in to see if I could get a day for it and it turned out the deputy head who gets all the requests was going himself and I think he was quite impressed that you know, I had asked to go to it. Em, so no, I really enjoyed that day as well. It was good and certainly when possible, I mean I have been looking at the faith and learning magazines and I've crossed a few things that I would like to.

The Catholic teachers placed in the nondenominational sector spoke of being 'out of the loop' in terms of hearing about CPD opportunities specifically related to their faith. However, two of these teachers illustrated how they had been proactive in ensuring that they did receive some sort of development, regardless of the fact that they were not in the Catholic sector. Eileen received information about a Diocesan day for probationary teachers and she asked her Head Teacher if she could participate. She was allowed to attend but only heard of other such occasions by chance. She explained how she feels left out:

There was a Mass for teachers with the Catholic qualification in November and I only heard about it through different channels so I think you are left a wee bit like, you're not in the club. It's a shame really because obviously you are still [a Catholic] and from the Diocese point of view and Catholic schools point of view they should be trying to keep Catholic teachers as opposed to kinda ostracizing them.

Ed also attended the Diocesan day for probationers, but he was also instrumental in setting up some additional opportunities directly related to his position as a Catholic teacher. He explained why this has been the case;

When I found out that I was in a non-Catholic school, I made it clear that I want as much support to follow up the Catholic side of things because ideally that's where I want to teach in denominational schools.

This was not met with any resistance and both the local authority and the nondenominational school in which he was placed accepted Catholic-related activities as part of his 'McCrone' professional development time.

I've also now taken that further with CPD in that my Monday's, part of my 0.3 out of class, I'm using it to go to Our Lady's of Lourdes school for like 4 different sessions, where I'm gonna get involved in the Alive-O programme. Or to at least observe it for 1½ hour over those 4 weeks.

In summarising the current position in Catholic schools—based on the accounts of these teachers—it appears, then, that there are different experiences in terms of the formal opportunities that are presented to staff with regards to matters of faith development. The majority had little or no awareness of available courses for this purpose and those who had some knowledge of them had sought this information themselves by way of checking local authority CPD or Diocesan literature. Perhaps surprisingly, there was little awareness of what the Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES) had to offer in terms of CPD provision. A small minority had experienced some formal faith development opportunities in the form of courses or a school retreat and some had been proactive in seeking such development opportunities themselves and then obtaining approval from senior school staff to attend. Those placed in the nondenominational sector believed that they were missing out on formal faith development opportunities when, in reality, only a very small proportion of staff in Catholic schools were aware of such activities. Interestingly, it was when the teachers—from both sectors—actively sought formal faith development opportunities that, on the whole, these actually occurred.

5.3.3 Impact of leadership

Leadership in Catholic education... has a strategic role to play in the maintenance of the distinctive character of Catholic education. It can be argued that educational leaders have a responsibility to maintain and invigorate Catholic culture in education as an alternative to the worst excesses of market culture in the wider educational system (Grace, 1996:70).

Much has been written about school leadership, and indeed of that in the Catholic sector, and it is widely recognised that the current dominant culture in

the Western world provides those charged with the responsibility of leading Catholic schools with new and particular challenges. The Church's view of Catholic education exemplifies this. It states that education,

is not given for the purpose of gaining power but as an aid towards a fuller understanding of, and communion with man, events and things. Knowledge is not to be considered as a means of material prosperity and success, but as a call to serve and to be responsible for other (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977: para 56).

Here, the focus is very much on *service* and *community*, ideals that arguably are very alien to much of the contemporary world in which young Catholics and others are engaged. O'Keefe (1999) describes this insightfully, when he argues the prevalent culture is that of 'narcissism': people being obsessed with themselves and their own well-being rather than that of others or, indeed, with *service* to others. He argues, 'the flood of books, magazines, groups and seminars pertaining to self-help, self-realisation, self-actualisation and finding oneself confirms the existence of such an obsession' (p17). He continues by suggesting that this society—which he argues is dominated by market forces—no longer values concepts such as *trust* or *solidarity* or even *community*. Catholics and those attending Catholic schools 'resemble the rest of the world's population' (ibid: 19) since they engage with this culture on a day-to-day basis and have assimilated into—and are very much a part of—this society, where the focus appears to be on the individual and survival of the fittest. It is also claimed that Catholics, who adhere to their religious tradition and popularly labelled as 'practising Catholics', are much more discerning in their approach to faith; many are now well educated and affluent. Rather than looking up to priests and respecting them as 'rulers', they now—more often than not—work *with* them and very easily pass judgement on their views and practices. In addition, Catholics appear to have much more control over their lives 'in a way their grandparents never did' and it is argued that the majority do not 'value the spiritual development of their children as highly as their career development' (Walch, 1996:245).

This view of contemporary society may appear very negative and indeed others have argued and provided evidence suggesting that there are real economic and personal benefits in promoting and adhering to such values. In addition, in recent

years there have been Global Citizenship developments, where groups of people and individuals have been encouraged to consider their roles and responsibilities within both local and global contexts, in caring for other human beings and the planet in its entirety. Regardless, it is claimed that a narcissistic view of society still dominates in the developed world and is arguably counter-cultural to the ideals and values supposedly promoted and lived in the Catholic school—a school very much a part of this society—and this then presents the Catholic school leader with particular challenges. Grace (1996) argues that wider societal principles are also reflected in the prevailing conception of education in America and in the UK since it is now ‘aggressively market orientated and individualistic’ (p70) and he attributes this trend to the New Right conception of Education. O’Keefe (1999) concurs, stating that the ‘fundamental unit of consideration in the education marketplace is the individual... and not the wellbeing of the whole’ and warning of the dangers of Catholic educators ‘uncritically embracing’ such a principle (p20).

In attempting to address these issues it has been claimed that the Catholic school should be considered by all those concerned to be both a *civic* and a *religious* institution (Morris,1998). While it shares a lot in common with other schools, it is to be considered first and foremost a Christian community, that has its goals ‘rooted in Christ and his teachings as recorded in the Gospels’ (p96). Groome (1996) agrees, suggesting that school leaders should consider their schools to be both a ‘public’ and ‘ecclesial’ community (echoing the sentiment emerging from the last section that discussed ‘teachers as Church’). However, the *public* concern of the school is not to succumb to the external pressures from society, but rather to commit to a social responsibility where teachers and children are to be of service to others and care for and contribute to the ‘common good’. Its *ecclesial* dimension should therefore be concerned with links with the local and universal Church, in addition to considering itself as a community of faith.

The role of the Catholic school leader then, is claimed to be even more important today than in the past. The expectation of leaders has not changed—that is, to be ‘not only professional leaders but also faith leaders’ and also ‘stewards’ of spiritual and Catholic development (Grace, 2002:211). It is argued that

contemporary conditions increase the need for Catholic school leaders to recognise this role and Sullivan (2000) claims that there is the requirement for greater ‘theological literacy’ among head teachers in order to realise their full potential (p82).

Those interviewed for the purpose of this research—and placed in the Catholic sector—were asked to comment on the expectation of their school with regard to faith in general and indeed their own faith position and, in doing so, they revealed their experiences in these early stages of their careers as Catholic teachers. Indications of the quality and impact of *Catholic* school leadership started to emerge.

Explicit/Implicit

Four of the teachers interviewed commented that the Catholic nature and culture of the school was explicitly stressed to them during their first week in school and they were told that there was an expectation of them to respect, embrace and promote this. For the most part, these conversations took place during the initial meeting with their head teacher or members of the senior management team and, where there were other probationary teachers in the school, they too were present at these meetings. Andrew highlighted his own experience, revealing how upfront the school was in stressing the school’s faith dimension.

I remember all the stuff that I got bombarded with in the first week and that was one of like the priorities just to like emphasis the fact that this IS a Catholic school, promoting a Catholic ethos with the children.

Included in this ‘bombardment’ was an array of literature and policy documents of which some made explicit reference to the school as a place of faith. Patricia’s experience was similar, but she also commented on the commitment of the senior management team to the spiritual and faith dimension of the school:

The deputy head and ...the principal teacher they both you know gave us a lot of support when we came in and talked about, they always talk about you know, the importance of reinforcing it [faith] all the time.

Laura explained that in her experience the head teacher's principle focus was on the promotion of faith and of Religious Education and that there was an expectation that staff would support this too. She commented that '*he just told us once and after that he just expects it*'. When asked how her role as a Catholic teacher had been supported, she revealed;

Quite a lot...the head teacher is very, very, very religious... and very into the Catholic thing and just lots of different things but em he makes you think about it and you have to be more on guard as regards to religious education and faith than anything else.

She continues by giving examples of how the head teacher promotes this:

Any kind of saints day will be celebrated... not just Christmas or St Andrew's Day, it's like anything he can find he'll celebrate and [the faith development of teachers] is one of the biggest priorities here.... Also, for the Alive-O! and things he likes you to find something from the Bible that would relate to it so you have to go and search the Bible and if you can't find anything then he'll help you...There's always Mass for the staff on in-service days and during Advent there was Mass every morning. It lasts about 15-20minutes.

Laura commented on the impact that this has on her and the other staff's faith. She spoke of how staff in the school are, now, very aware of their own faith positions and how they are committed to working on this, owing to the expectation of the head teacher.

For others, however, there was no *explicit* mention of faith or their own faith commitment as such but, with the exception of four schools—where the teachers there were dissatisfied with the level of perceived faith commitment exhibited—all commented that there was an underlying or *implicit* assumption of school leaders that staff would be committed to promoting the Catholic faith in the school and indeed working towards developing it. For the most part, this was based on the respondents' experience of faith witness by others in the school, and in particular, that of the head teacher.

It's evident in the way that the head teacher comes across. I would say, the way she deals with her staff in general. I would say that there's a definite Catholic ethos in this school. [Helen]

Paul spoke of the strong Catholic '*ambience*' in the school and how the head teacher was the key player in this. He gave examples of her putting Catholic papers in the staff room and encouraging him to set up altars and create religious

displays, all of which he claimed supported him in his faith. He also made reference to the strong parish links that the head teacher had established and how pleased he was with regard to this.

Marie, teaching in a Glasgow secondary school, spoke of how she looked to the senior management team for guidance. When commenting on the implicit expectations of the school in terms of faith development and witness she said;

They want you to live a life where, they want you to behave in work that's doing the best for the children and doing the best job you can and I think that part of that is to prove to the children that yeah, your faith is important to you and you will need it.

When asked how she knew this she explained,

You look to the way the senior management behave, the principal behaves and the how the other teachers behave.

Other examples of implicit expectations of the head teacher with regard to faith development and faith promotion of the teachers were given, and many of these referred to the manner in which the head teacher encouraged certain activities or gave witness to his or her own faith on a regular basis. Mary believed that the faith development of staff in her school was high on the list of priorities and that 'certainly the head teacher takes the lead role in that.' She continued,

Well I mean, for instance, he really, really promotes anything that's going on to do with sort of the religious life of the school he promotes em, and in particular if there's Mass on, then he's round reminding people. I don't think it's a pressure thing but he is round reminding kids in the morning that they could go in there. I think if it comes from the top, then I think it probably has an affect... I think it's just, it's something that's quite visible within the school, that em you know that we're expected, well you know, 'expect' is maybe too strong a word because there are choices but there's a strong feeling of faith within the school.

Additional examples were given, such as the head teacher having Mass celebrated on a regular basis in the school on the first Friday of the month, or being visible and attending morning Mass held in the local parish or school during Advent before school commenced. Regularly praying with the staff and the children was also mentioned as evidence that faith was a perceived priority of the school leader, along with the support and encouragement of staff to attend Mass or go on retreat during in-service days. In Marie's school the head teacher had set up a 'faith and learning committee' that was charged with the

responsibility for promoting faith within the school. Marie commented that this conveyed a strong message to her about the importance of faith in her school and, as a result, she has become more involved in various school-based, faith-related activities.

For the majority of those teaching in the Catholic sector, then, a strong sense of expectation from the school leader was present with regard to the faith commitment and faith development of staff. A third of those respondents experienced evidence of this expectation directly, where the head teacher or members of the senior management team verbally communicated its importance to their probationers during the first few days of their posts. Interestingly, this verbal communication was supported by numerous faith activities that occurred in the first few months of the teachers' posts, reinforcing to them that these comments were not simply paying lip-service to this area.

For the others, this expectation was much more implicit and, even at this early stage in their careers, was evident by the manner with which the school leaders went about their everyday business, actively promoting a faith environment. A number of respondents commented that they realised that there were signs that the leadership of the head teacher was having a positive impact on their own faith. Some found themselves attending Mass much more frequently during the school week (if it was available) and others were even actively participating, by reading at Mass or attending retreats. Without exception, all of those interviewed and who commented on experiencing the promotion of Catholic faith in the school on the part of the head teacher, valued his or her contribution and considered it to be very worthwhile.

Of the teachers who were placed in the Catholic sector for their probationary period, four did *not* perceive the faith dimension of the school to be a priority or indeed, the development of their own faith in relation to their job. One primary teacher, Patrick, believed that this was owing to particular pressures that were outwith the school's control. His school was merging with another and the head teacher was effectively doing two jobs, working within both. He gave examples of faith activities in the school, such as the school coming together to celebrate

first Friday Mass once a month, but other than that, there was no other focus on the religious dimension of the school.

Diane revealed that she had experienced very little support in terms of her role as a Catholic teacher and indicated that promotion of, or living out the Catholic faith, was not a focus of this school. She commented that she felt it was no different from a nondenominational school since it *'doesn't have a Catholic feel to it... other than there is a crucifix downstairs.'* She explained how she was *'annoyed'* about this and how this made her job even more challenging;

I feel as if that's lacking here and I would like there to be more input...It's hard with the Primary 7s to bring religion in because they don't take it seriously, they're not seeing it in school, they are not seeing it in the house.

The school had undergone *'inspection after inspection'*, and by referring to recent visits from HMI and Quality Assurance, she mused that this pressure was perhaps reason for the lack of faith promotion by the school leader. Diane, however, did not accept it as a valid excuse.

The remaining two probationers highlighted certain activities that indicated to them that faith was important to their prospective head teachers at some level. However there was evidence to suggest that much of this was lip-service and that there were no measures in place to ensure that staff were fully supportive of and engaging with this dimension of the school. Pauline did not feel supported in her role as a Catholic teacher and gave very isolated examples of faith activities that she believed her head teacher *'imposed'* on her and her colleagues without consultation. She spoke of a 'prayer bell' ringing in the morning where all classes have to stop what they are doing and pray at that moment. The lack of consultation about this was frowned upon by her and her colleagues, and therefore was met with resistance.

A memo was sent round [about it]. They kinda, teachers didn't like it but it wasn't for faith reasons, it was for practical reasons.

Julie, another primary teacher, was not aware of many opportunities for faith development in her school and although she did not doubt that her head teacher and other staff valued this, there had been no evidence of this in her first few

months teaching there. When asked about the expectation of the school in terms of faith development of staff, she commented;

It's probably in the policy folder!

Interestingly, a common thread running through the experiences of those who had not witnessed faith to be a focus, was the lack of community in the school and there was evidence of friction amongst staff. As the next section will illustrate, this differed quite considerably from those in the schools where faith was being promoted or perceived to being lived.

Community

Without exception, every teacher who had commented that faith and its development of both staff and pupils was a priority of their school, also made reference to the positive sense of *community* that existed in their workplace and how this had affected them and their own faith. Some made direct reference to this term 'community' and spoke of their satisfaction with regards to this.

It's quite a close community I would say that the staff are quite a close community even things like where you get an email on the Wednesday inviting you down here on the Thursday at teatime to the conference area and to get together and ... they make cakes and stuff like that and the money goes to charity... so there is a community spirit in the school. [Gemma]

There is a strong feeling that this is a Christian community here.. we have Mass on a Tuesday morning for staff and pupils, we have it on a Wednesday at lunchtime and all during Advent and coming up to Lent there will be Mass every day... it is well attended by both staff and pupils. [Mary]

This is a healthy good school so I think the support is so strong, there is a big sense of community and I think that they just give everyone so much support. [Marie]

It's just a caring sort of community here and the involvement they have with the surrounding community...I mean they go out to the old people's homes for carol singing...its all community orientated. [Patricia]

Others alluded to this sense of community in the school where comments such as 'there is a good ethos in the school' or 'there is a definite Catholic ethos in the school which is nice' were frequently used. Francesca gave an example of this, referring to the times when the school celebrated Mass together;

We all went as a school which was lovely, really nice so there is a strong faith, there is a strong Catholic feeling in the school and they have loads of asylum seekers here as well

there's been a whole involvement of their religion and our religion and bringing that together and it's a lovely atmosphere in regards to that.

She continued,

All the staff get on great, they work together and there's a great atmosphere.

Other examples highlighting the feeling of community in these schools were given such as having a school prayer that is recited by the whole school on a daily basis or charity events to which everyone can contribute.

Much of the comments that revealed the teacher's positive reaction to the strong sense of community within the school were—more often than not—as a result of the prayer or worship dimension to the school, a dimension often promoted and encouraged by the head teachers. Maria gave insight into her own experience;

You know, its nice to see all the kids together, see them up doing their readings and I think it is nice for the community too... you all walk up past the school together and it is sociable and it's [attending Mass] a nice way to start the day.

Although those placed in the nondenominational sector indicated that they were enjoying their probationary year, there were comments suggesting that they felt a community dimension was lacking in their schools and that this was something that they missed. This was particularly noticeable for those placed in secondary schools.

There's nothing where the whole school gets together to see each other, or anything, I mean they'll have discos but that's not the same thing. It's definitely not. [Brenda]

The Catholic schools definitely have that kinda all coming together aspect and that's quite nice, like you know Mass and things like that. You don't have any of that here which is a bit of a shame... there isn't a coming together of the whole school for any reason. [Eileen]

Things like not having Masses. Like we used to have a Mass in the Catholic school on a Wednesday and there's nothing like that...It's a pity. I do think that it is a pity em it's something I certainly miss I do miss it, I think that there's a lot to be gained from it. [Emma]

'Community' emerged as a concept valued by many of the respondents since this they believed had a positive effect on the faith of the school and of themselves.

5.3.4 Commentary

It is clear from this second round of interviews that those participating managed the transition from their ITE programmes into full-time professional practice without any major difficulties or traumas. With regards to this particular study, what quickly became apparent was that, as a consequence of the transition, they had developed a more thorough *understanding* of what it means to them to be a Catholic teacher. The majority of these probationers had been placed in the Catholic sector and had experienced four months of teaching in school—the longest period of time in the classroom they had embarked upon. They appeared to be gaining gradual ownership of their role and, instead of referring to Church documentation or what they had been told when attempting to describe their role and responsibilities as Catholic educators, they were able to articulate this for themselves based on their experiences. The confident manner in which they did this, coupled with the depth of response offered on this subject, suggest that these teachers were now more aware of their own faith positions and able to consider and reflect upon their contribution to Catholic education. A ‘synchronisation of ideals and realities’ appeared to have taken place (Jones, 2005) since the experience of being in school on a full-time basis was somewhat different from the image or picture portrayed as pre-service teachers. This justifies the title ‘*From Theory to Practice*’ being given as the core category for this stage in the research, since the emerging theory is as a result of the teachers moving from pre-service to full-time work in the school environment.

Socialisation

It became apparent very quickly that these teachers were being subsumed into their particular school cultures and while only a handful made any direct reference to an awareness of this, the majority of teachers indicated a sense of contentment with how this was happening. Stuart and Thurlow (2000) highlight that newly qualified teachers are insecure, vulnerable and unconfident when they embark on their first year of teaching and that ‘socialisation to the status quo’ (p113) is often the outcome. While this could be considered as a negative result since the probationers’ own teaching philosophies and ideals could be quashed by a ‘powerful and pervasive existing school culture’ (ibid:113) this did not appear to be the case for the vast majority of those interviewed for the purposes

of this study. On the contrary, there was evidence to suggest that the individuals' personal convictions and beliefs were very much aligned to—and at home within—the culture of the school in which they were placed. In terms of their views on Catholic education and on their own faith development, for those who had exhibited strong allegiances to the Catholic faith in the first round of interviews, finding themselves in an environment that actively promoted the Catholic faith was very much welcomed.

Those opposing faith schools have argued that there is a danger for teachers to promote a particular set of values or a lifestyle in preference to another since these can simply be a matter of personal taste (Morris, 1998). However Pring (1978) claims that *all* teachers are influenced in some way by theory or ideologies and that even if they try hard not to, they will always promote a particular set of values – their own.

Much has been written about the power of school cultures and of the effect on the newly qualified teacher that their transmission can have (Jones, 2005; Wu, 1998; Olsen & Osborne, 1991). Turner (1994) argues that a newly qualified teacher's ability to adjust to a professional role is dependant on, amongst other things, socialisation into the school environment. If teachers believe that they 'fit in' then it is claimed that they will feel more secure and that they belong there, and this is a necessary prerequisite for 'expressing self-doubt, and engaging in critical reflection and collaboration' (Jones, 2005:516). Wu (1998) has investigated ways in which the work environment influences teachers and their professional development and claims that 'people are profoundly affected by the social setting in which they are involved' (p214). Morris (1998:99) has argued that 'the work of the most brilliant can be nullified if the underlying values and attitudes of the institution in which they work are alien to their own'. Conversely he claims that if an individual's personal culture is closely allied to that of the manifest culture of the school, then the potential for successfully achieving the overall aims is significantly enhanced (ibid). Jones' (2005) study of newly qualified teachers in English secondary schools reveals that there is indeed a connection between the development of new teachers' professional competences and the 'degree to which their values and attitudes are congruent with those

promoted by the school' (p517). However, as Sullivan (2002) explains, the purpose of the school must be explicit in order for this to occur; 'without a connection to the bigger picture, a larger story, a deeper purpose, a wider set of values, the routines and rubrics of schools soon become both for teachers and for pupils restricting, irrelevant, time-wasting and alienating' (p95).

A minority of those placed in the Catholic sector revealed their disappointment with the culture of their school with regard to the perceived lack of promotion of the Catholic faith. As they were very vocal in reciting examples of this, they also conveyed their own views in this area in the context of their beliefs and convictions, and these appeared much stronger in this round of interviews than they did during the first stage. Interestingly Sullivan (ibid:94) comments that newly qualified teachers are usually so concerned with the 'micro dimension of teaching'—that is, being pre-occupied with what is going on in their classroom and being equipped to survive it on a day-to-day basis, that they fail to notice the role of the school leader and of the overall management of the school. This, however, did not appear to be the case for the majority of these teachers. They were very aware of aspects of the head teacher's role and were able to provide comprehensive feedback—including criticism—about the behaviour of these school leaders in relation to the faith dimension of the school.

Community

Another concept that emerged was the effect that a strong sense of *community* had on these teachers. Occasions of coming together to worship, or evidence of the school being upfront about being a place of faith where people within it shared a common purpose, had a positive effect on the faith of many of the teachers. Examples of being proactive as a result of such a strong ethos or community were given, such as becoming more involved in promoting the spiritual life of the school or attending Mass during the school week. Others simply felt encouraged or supported in their role and spoke favourably about occasions when staff came together for religious or even social events. For the five teachers placed in the nondenominational sector, four referred to missing the sense of community that they had experienced in their pre-service placements in Catholic schools, a concept which they believe occurred as a result of the school

having an explicit common purpose, providing regular opportunities to come together.

There were very few examples of *formal* faith development CPD opportunities occurring for staff in the Catholic schools, but when they were available, these were considered worthwhile. However, at this early stage in the research, there are strong indications that the culture of a school—including the manner and extent to which it promotes and lives as a community of faith—can have a strong impact on the faith of its teachers and contribute to their development in this area. There are also strong indications emerging from this research to suggest that key to this is the role of the school leader.

Leadership – witness

It is argued that there are distinct differences between school managers and school leaders. Sullivan (2002) eloquently summarises this by suggesting that ‘a manager tends to work within a system that already exists and seeks to ensure that it functions efficiently and effectively’ (p92). In contrast, leaders concern themselves with ‘the symbolic, the imagined, the future: they focus on inspiring a vision, developing a culture, addressing change and facing both the future and the outside world’ (ibid). Within the context of this study, it is emerging that many of the respondents’ head teachers appear to exhibit some of the ‘leadership’ qualities that Sullivan alludes to. The witness of the head teacher that many of the probationers spoke of, was a powerful symbol of the Catholic nature of the school and was certainly appearing to have a developmental effect on new staff, resulting in many of them contributing directly to the school’s culture and commenting that their faith was being strengthened. Many examples have been given of the head teacher and indeed others in the senior management team being upfront about their faith. These ranged from attending school services, speaking openly to the children and staff about their own faith, treating others and behaving in a Christian manner and ensuring that there were faith activities and development opportunities in the school. Establishing strong parish links, encouraging the celebration of Mass regularly in the school, having and reciting school prayers, creating committees for the purpose of faith development and charging others with the responsibility to take this forward, supporting

school retreats and reminding and encouraging staff to be involved in the spiritual life of the school were a number of examples given, suggesting that the head teachers were committed to being 'faith leaders'. The positive impact that this demonstration of faith had on many of the probationers has been recorded.

Morris (1998) stresses the importance of Catholic schools expressing Catholic values and that their distinctive culture should have overtly 'religious characteristics' and be places which demonstrate the 'Gospel in action' (p98). It is beginning to emerge, then, that although very few examples of formal faith development CPD opportunities had been made available to these newly qualified teachers at this early stage in their careers, the effect of a strong Catholic culture, led and witnessed to by committed Catholic head teachers, has had a direct impact on their faith.

Conversely, some of the participants were working in environments where there was, according to them, *poor* Catholic leadership that they attributed to a variety of different reasons. What was revealing, however, was their correlation between this and the lack of community that they had experienced at this early stage in their careers, a concept that will be explored further in the next section of results.

Much of the seemingly positive effects of strong Catholic leadership and a strong Catholic culture on the teacher's faith have been as a result of participants' day-to-day *experiences*. What has been mentioned much less is the advancement or development in *knowledge* about their faith and of the tradition to which they belong. It has already been noted that it is claimed that a theological literacy is lacking amongst teachers and indeed Catholic school leaders. It is argued that ideally, every Catholic teacher should have a thorough understanding of the belief systems of the Catholic faith (Sullivan, 2002) but it is also recognised that this is certainly not a reality. The first stage of interviews revealed that many of the respondents, as pre-service teachers, were concerned with their lack of knowledge of the Catholic tradition, and sought support in this particular area. Other than individuals reporting that they had spent some of their own time reading about aspects of religion, there has been little to suggest from this round

of interviews that their knowledge of aspects of their faith and of the Catholic tradition has developed further.

Owing to the limitation of the sample group, the findings and experiences recorded here cannot be claimed to be representative of *all* newly qualified Catholic teachers in Scotland, however the results are indicative and—it is argued here—are likely to exist in similar settings which will lead to the same emergent theory. The next stage of results—which focus on the round of interviews conducted with participants at the *end* of their probationary period—will provide further evidence to support, develop and therefore strengthen the claims made here regarding the influence that culture and leadership can have on the newly qualified teacher.

In concluding this section it is worth pointing out that, without exception, every teacher interviewed—regardless of the sector in which they were placed—still indicated a strong desire to receive development in their faith.

5.4 Stage three – Socialisation: finding a voice

'The test of a leader lies in the reaction and response of his followers. His worth as a leader is measured by the achievement of the led.'

- General Omar N. Bradley (1893-1981)

Stage three of the data collection process occurred during the last month of the probationers' first full year of teaching in the Scottish education system. This however, happened only six months after the previous interviewing stage. Since the probationary year is a relatively new initiative—where individuals are, supposedly, closely monitored as they attempt successfully to gain full registration into the teaching profession—it was considered appropriate and indeed important to capture and record the respondents' experiences and expectations of teaching at the end of this important stage in their professional career.

Of the twenty-one newly qualified teachers interviewed in the first and second stages of the process, all agreed to be interviewed again for the purposes of this research. These individual semi-structured interviews occurred in June, just prior to the school summer recess. This round of interviews explored further the theory that had emerged from the second stage of the study, therefore the questions asked were fewer but were much more focused (Appendix 4), being concerned with capturing and exploring their experiences of leadership and school culture with regard to faith development, in addition to the formal (organised) or informal faith development activities in which they were—or had been—engaged.

Before presenting the results for this particular stage, it was felt worthwhile and appropriate to consider some concepts of leadership and culture found in a range of recent literature.

5.4.1 Values-driven Leadership and Community

Richard Elmore (2005) has much to say about school leadership and its associated changes. In one of his most recent contributions to this topic, he explains that there is a misconception regarding correlations between the changing demands placed on head teachers and their leadership practices. It is widely recognised and accepted that in the last twenty years the educational environment in schools has altered significantly, owing to a variety of factors but including external influences, the increased attention given to target setting and performance based accountability. However Elmore (*ibid*) claims that what has *not* been addressed or focussed upon are the *practices* of school leaders in relation to these changes. Changes in school conditions do not necessarily stimulate changes in leadership practice and, according to Elmore, this is an area worthy of attention.

There is widespread acceptance of the importance of school leadership and the key role it plays in the management of school development and of the promotion of the school environment as a place of positive learning and teaching (Flores 2004; Gold *et al*, 2003; Day *et al*, 1998). Nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest from the present study alone and indeed from others (Flores, 2004;

Williams *et al*, 2001), that leadership styles vary significantly and indeed can have quite powerful results and impact, particularly when the focus—as here—is on the newly qualified teacher.

Flores (2004), in her study of the impact of culture and leadership on newly qualified teachers in Portugal, observed that schools are not only places where teaching occurs, but they are places where teachers learn and develop and, according to her findings, the key to maximising the potential for this is the direction of the school leader. Gold *et al* (2003), when reporting on their exploration of the ‘moral art’ of educational leadership (p127), identified a number of key features that they claim are synonymous with its effectiveness and success. Their study of ten ‘outstanding’ school principals in England—as judged by Ofsted—revealed the importance of values-led leadership, where the ‘values’ being referred to are not those imposed and decided at a political level, but rather the personal, moral and educational values of the school leader, values which may not always be compatible with government policies or initiatives. (It is important to note that these reported findings considered school leadership in general and not just of that in the faith schools’ context.)

The study revealed that ‘welfarism’ as opposed to ‘new managerialism’ was the predominant focus of these successful school leaders, where the issue of fundamental importance and driving force was the ‘educational, social and personal development of *all* pupils and staff’, rather than according priority to concerns such as the management of resources, the significance of parental choice and market forces (ibid:136). Values concerning matters such as ‘inclusivity, equal opportunities, equity, justice, high expectations, engagement with stakeholders, cooperation, teamwork, commitment and understanding’ were high on the agenda of good school leaders (ibid) and therefore having such values-driven leadership was established as being an important feature of these acclaimed principals. However, what was considered even more effective was the manner in which these values were manifested and shared in the wider school environment.

Those teachers working in the schools led by ‘outstanding’ principals commented on the manner in which they observed their leaders demonstrating their values on a daily basis through their words and deeds, and explained how their personal qualities (such as openness, compassion, accessibility and honesty, to mention but a few) related to this. This echoes Deal and Kennedy’s (1982) emphasis, in their book *Corporate Cultures*—which applies to different kinds of organisations—on the importance of leaders promoting shared values when attempting to develop an organisational culture. Citing Deal and Kennedy (1982), Johnson & Castelli (2000) emphasise that good leaders should, ‘look for ways to reach into the organisation to establish the importance of the culture and its chosen values’ and ‘they implicitly communicate key values and inculcate them via day-to-day actions’ (p 78).

In Gold *et al*’s study (2003), school staff spoke of transparency and free-flow of information being important in terms of how their leaders’ values were transmitted—and eventually owned—by the wider school community. This research highlighted the impact that something as simple as a meeting can have in terms of the transmission of such values:

meetings can be seen as the visible manifestation of a school leader’s values system: clear ideals about respecting, transforming, developing and including staff can be evidenced by the importance given to meetings in a school and the way they are run. The amount of information that is accessible to staff is also a values-led decision – notions of secrecy and exclusion from information do not encourage trust and empowerment or even informed decision making (p132).

Elmore (2005) emphasises the effectiveness of values-driven leadership, but only from a position where these values become accepted, owned and lived by the wider school community. He stresses the necessity for leaders to ensure that their schools have ‘organisational values’ since this, he believes, moves a school from an ‘atomized state to a more coherent and organisational state’ (ibid:135). This he refers to as the ‘alignment of individual values with collective expectations’, a concept that he believes can take place if the school leader explicitly reinforces organisational values. He claims that in schools, pupils and staff primarily learn values through their daily work and practice and so, ‘accountable leadership... must focus on modelling common values through engagement in the work of instructional practice’ (ibid:141).

This concept of ‘living’ or ‘giving witness to’ values through word and action as a method of transmission is one that has been rehearsed repeatedly in literature surrounding the faith schools’ context (see, for example, Carr, 2000; Grace & O’Keefe, 2007). Indeed, within the Catholic Church there is a vast volume of documentation stressing the importance of this aspect of a Catholic teacher’s role (for example see *Gravissimum Educationis*, 1965, para8). However, the values which are expected to be lived and witnessed are not simply the personal, moral and educational values that the individual leader or school may agree upon, but are also specifically *religious* values—those that are based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ and are expected to be shared and lived by all of those within the Catholic school, regardless of who is teaching or learning within them. It could be argued that such values appear to be imposed on schools and school leaders since their origins are from a particular religious tradition, but the difference of this kind of imposition compared with a governmental or political one is that teachers choosing to teach in the Catholic school are aware of these values prior to embarking on a career within a denominational sector and, certainly in the Scottish context, these are expected to be aligned to their own personal values. Therefore, certain values are already expected to be a part of the Catholic school’s culture, but it is the extent of their promotion and manifestation within this culture that will determine whether they will be transmitted or not. More often than not, the responsibility falls to the school leader to ensure that these values are obvious, accepted by others in the school and, as the Church expects, ‘lived’.

It has been argued that it is difficult to try to establish a homogenous description of a Catholic school, since doing so would ‘burden’ schools with unrealistic expectations or no account would be given to those working within them or to the specific contexts in which different schools are placed (McLaughlin, 1998). Indeed Treston (1997) believes that there exist a number of different models of Catholic school worldwide, ranging from those that are predominantly ‘traditional’ in terms of the expectation they place on staff and pupils to support a culture that is strongly characterised by Catholic rituals, to the ‘secular Catholic’ school where—while accepting and stating Catholic rhetoric—the

dominant culture would conform to consumerism, or where the school is viewed first and foremost as a business rather than as a branch of the Church. Regardless, McLaughlin (1998) states that the *raison d'être* for *all* Catholic schools is their identification with the Church's mission: to work for the 'establishment of God's Kingdom' (p26). This, it is argued, is even more important in the contemporary world since there is evidence to suggest that there exists fragmentation within traditional Catholic communities, where many do not see going to Church as an obligatory aspect of their faith or where any strong sense of 'community' has diluted, owing to globalisation and the influx of a wide variety of other traditions and religions to historically Catholic environments. Within the Catholic school context therefore, establishing a sense of 'community' is seen to be important particularly since, outwith the school environment and particularly in the Western civilised world, this concept appears to have weakened (McLaughlin, 1998).

Arthur (1995) argues that whilst the main objectives of a school will be reflected in the curriculum, 'for the Catholic school the ethos and composition of the school community will play significant parts in influencing the way in which teaching and learning take place' (p82). Groome (1996) asserts that school has a lasting effect on individuals' 'identity, perspectives and values', primarily via its culture and ethos, but predominantly by the manner in which people come together and feel a part of a community (which he claims is a value in itself) (p115). He suggests that, for the Catholic school leader, there are four areas worthy of focus when considering how to ensure that these Gospel values are unambiguous, conspicuous and contagious. These he refers to as four of the Church's historical tasks:

- To teach the WORD of God (*kerygma*)
- To WITNESS as a community (*koinonia*)
- To WORSHIP God in prayer (*leitourgia*) and,
- To care for human WELFARE (*diakonia*)

According to Groome (1996:116), if these four areas of *word*, *witness*, *worship* and *welfare* (often referred to as '*service*' (see Grace, 1996)) are focused upon by

Catholic school leaders, then the result will be the promulgation of Gospel values which will be shared and promoted by others, creating and establishing a sense of community within the school. Ideally, in terms of the Catholic Church's expectations, these common values would not be relegated to a set time or to the RE department, but rather permeate school life and be embodied in the 'instructional practice' (Elmore, 2005:141) of those in the school, and predominantly of the school leader, thus giving the Catholic school a distinctive identity or *raison d'être* which Groome claims may assist in 'bonding its members into a cohesive community' (ibid:119).

Lacey (1996) claims that Catholic schools and their leaders are at an advantage when attempting to establish themselves as collaborative communities or when developing a 'shared hermeneutic' among staff (ibid:260) since specific Catholic philosophies and values already exist for the Catholic school and, from the outset in such locations, would be an expectation that some sort of communal understanding of these values would be present among teachers. However, Grace (1996)—while warning of 'romanticising' the concept of 'community' that may not always produce positive results within a school situation—explains that 'community' as a 'central value and symbol of Catholic schooling' has been under attack from a variety of pressures such as the 'ethic of individualism', narcissism and indeed, market forces (p76).

An environment encouraging collaboration—and which attempts to establish a sense of community among staff—can have an impact on individual teachers' learning and development, and this has been illustrated in both secular and denominational school literature. Lacey (1996) exposes the value of teachers feeling a part of—and respected within—a school community; being able to create or at least contribute to a school culture by being invited or encouraged to bring their own knowledge and experiences to their place of work and discuss and interpret ideas with others. She explains that 'through this kind of communal work, from *within* the profession, teachers realise the power of what they know from experience and gain the courage and desire to challenge and change practice' (p259). She advises of the dangers of neglecting or failing to build community in school, since teachers will 'run the risk of uncritically

accepting the canon of others' and simply complying with the status quo (ibid). According to McLaughlin (1993), the school should be viewed as a 'workplace community' in which professional efficacy and professional community should be constructed (p99). (For the religious school it could be argued that this should include, 'faith community'.) Hargreaves (1992) supports this, highlighting the importance of community when establishing a school culture. He argues that schools that are community orientated and have naturally 'collaborative' cultures are associated with places that stimulate teacher learning and development, are more supportive environments, resulting in better staff 'morale, commitment and retention' (Flores 2004:300). Flores (2004), when referring to empirical work carried out by Fernandez (2000), claims that 'developing a sense of self-efficacy and self-worth amongst teachers is a common trait in school leaders who support and promote the building of professional communities within schools' (p301).

Remaining within the secular context, Elmore (2005) echoes this principle of establishing cohesive communities and writes about the need for schools to have high levels of 'internal accountability' if they wish to become effective learning and teaching establishments in today's educational climate. By this he refers to schools that operate as a coherent whole where individuals' work is 'shaped by collective expectations, values and commitments' rather than organisations where work is 'the sum of the work of individuals' (ibid:136). Essentially schools where high levels of internal accountability exist are places of *community*, where values are discussed and agreed upon in a culture of inclusion and transparency, where people are valued and positively encouraged to contribute to the life of the school. This kind of environment, it is claimed, will encourage improvement in learning and teaching and overall school performance. Elmore (2005) stresses the need for leadership training in order for educators to learn how to lead and manage schools effectively in order to establish such levels of internal collaboration. This, he argues, has been lacking. He claims that there is evidence to suggest that educators tend to look to their existing knowledge and skills and try to make better use of this rather than accessing the new 'knowledge they need and assimilate that knowledge into their practice' (ibid:138).

It appears then that there is general agreement that one of the overarching influences in nurturing a sense of community within schools is leadership. The third interview stage for this research revealed much about the probationary teachers' experience of school leadership, particularly with regard to the faith context of the school and the community dimension that had or had not been established. The findings from this stage of the interviewing process will now be presented.

This particular round of interviews sought to explore the claims made in the previous section and in so doing, some additional categories emerged. The two main categories are:

- *symbolic leadership and,*
- *impact of community*

Both categories contain discrete concepts (see *Figure 5.3*) and contribute to establishing the core category for this particular stage in the research, namely '*Socialisation: finding a voice*'. This title was considered appropriate since the participants were at this stage much more comfortable in discussing the various situations they were in and were, for the most part, confident when detailing and evaluating their experiences.



Figure 5.3: Stage Three: Key Categories and their Concepts

5.4.2 Symbolic Leadership.

This stage in the data collection period confirmed the findings that emerged from the previous round of interviews regarding the impact that the leadership of the

school had on these probationers. Many of the respondents, who articulated a positive reaction to the way in which they felt the school was being led, referred very often to non-tangible experiences, using phrases—similar to those recorded in the last section—such as ‘ethos’, ‘atmosphere’ and ‘spirit’. However, when inviting them to explain what contributed to or created this, their accounts were similar in that they spoke of strong visible Catholic leadership. When analysing this further, it emerged that what they were referring to was the *symbolic* nature of leadership.

‘Leadership’, according to Hogan *et al* (1994), can be considered as ‘persuasion’. Leaders therefore have the difficult task of persuading or influencing others but, as has been already recorded, this is most effective when it occurs within a spirit of collaboration and without resorting to coercion. But how is this achieved? Vickery (2001) claims that leadership is essentially a ‘social interaction’ and that the process by which it is exercised is through symbolic interaction—that is, *communication*. He explains that ‘leaders cannot *not* communicate’ (ibid:315) and gives an example: when a leader refuses to make a decision about something then that in itself *is* a decision! He argues that virtually everything that leaders say or do, that others are aware of, *is* communication. ‘For every symbol—verbal or nonverbal—stimulates meaning in people who encounter it’ (ibid:316). Indeed, this ‘meaning’ may differ from person to person since what is being transferred in any interaction are symbols and not meaning. Meaning is created *within* individuals as they interpret the symbolic, communicative interaction that is taking place (Hackman & Johnson, 1991). For this reason, leadership has been called a ‘language game’, in the Wittgensteinian sense, since good leaders ‘manage meaning’ and have the ability to give those they are influencing an understanding of what they are doing and an ability to explain why they are doing it (Vickery, 2001:316). Leadership and communication are therefore inextricably linked.

Vickery shares his concern about a lack of awareness of the concept of leadership as a symbolic communicative interaction often found in commercially produced literature on the subject:

..too many of the latest additions to the estimated 10,000 published works on leadership continue to treat communication as something leaders merely engage in (or not) at their peril, rather than something inherent in the nature of leadership itself (ibid:317).

He argues that this difference in perspective affects leadership success and this can be seen in the responses of those whom leaders are attempting to influence. Indeed, the findings from this round of interviews support this concept of symbolic leadership and the influence it can have on individuals and groups of staff in schools. These will now be presented.

Verbal and non-verbal (words and actions)

The teachers interviewed for this study were asked to comment on the leadership in their school. As was evident from the previous section's presentation of results, there were both positive and negative experiences amongst the probationers.

Francesca discussed the ways in which the leadership of her school was very 'Catholic'. She spoke of how her head teacher was very strong in her faith and she based this assumption on what her head teacher said and did.

..on a Monday morning we have our Assembly and ..we start with a prayer, she'll often frequently talk about what happened at Mass the day before. What was the theme from Mass the day before? Em. And then we'll always finish with a hymn and we'll always finish with a prayer...everything is underpinned by these morals and these values. Why is it we're going to keep our school tidy? Cause we look after our property and we love the world that we've been given by God.. you know, everything is phrased very carefully like that. The head teacher is very very strong

She continues by talking about how this has affected her:

I've noted how my Head Teacher's come across on a Monday morning. Yeah I did go to Mass yesterday and this is what the readings were about and the Gospels about...that's been quite striking for me cause I didn't know, I didn't expect that or I didn't know whether to expect that or not but I felt that it's been quite prominent. Quite obvious. And I've felt like she started off our week in a very Catholic way and a very clear Christian Catholic way. You know putting across the message from nine o'clock on a Monday morning. This is how we run our school and this is what we want our school to be like and quite often we go back to the week before, what happened and this wasn't very good and that doesn't reflect the values of such and such and...It just gives you the sense that you're working together and it's easier to do what you're trying to do because you've got a role model like that to show you a way of putting yourself across to children.

Francesca demonstrates a positive reaction to the symbolic interaction of her head teacher and her analysis of what this form of communication has meant for her in her probationary year. She comments on how she has 'noted' the words

and actions of the head teacher and how this impacts on her. She speaks of the ‘message’ that she takes from her leader’s behaviour and how this has made her feel a part of a community as there is a ‘sense’ that she’s not alone in what she is doing. The meaning she has given to her head teacher’s behaviour, and indeed the impact that it has had on her, is not a result of coercion or brainwashing, but rather a result of her own interpretation of the symbolic interaction of her leader. The head teacher did not tell Francesca what to think but she conveyed through her social interactions, both verbal and non-verbal, some of her values and expectations and the result—certainly in Francesca’s case—is that school leader is viewed as a role model, and her words and actions will be imitated.

Denise’s experience of leadership in her school was also positive. She commented on how the head teacher and senior management team were visible in Church every morning before school, during the season of Lent. She explained, ‘*all throughout Lent the head teacher and the senior management were at mass... it sets an example and shows a strong connection with the Church.*’ She continued by giving other examples of what she considered was strong, Catholic leadership in her school. These included the visibility of the priest in the school, the regular celebration of the Church’s sacraments such as reconciliation and the Eucharist on the first Friday of every month. In addition she commented on the head teacher creating a school oratory, a space for prayer in the school—something that would be more common in secondary schools than primary schools. When asked if this had affected her in any way she responded;

It just, it makes me very aware that although even though my parish is far away, I still have to be there regularly in order to come in here and be able to speak because the children, most of the children in this school regularly attend and I like to go in and say well what did your priest say at mass and things so that for me is quite important and I feel that I have to keep going and really pay attention to what’s being said on a Sunday so that I can come in and I’ve got a strong understanding to then pass onto the children because I think that is expected throughout the school.

Denise’s interpretation of the words and actions of her school leaders had an impact on her, insofar as she concluded that there was an expectation of she and her colleagues to be attending mass regularly in order to teach her children appropriately. Again, this was not communicated directly to this teacher but rather it was her own analysis and interpretation of her leaders’ behaviour. Her

reaction to this, in terms of her faith, was positive and she even spoke about being more proactive outwith the school environment by volunteering to take the Children's Liturgy Group at Mass on a Sunday, a parallel liturgy during mass, that caters for children and their understanding of the Scripture readings for that day.

Paul, a mature teacher in a Catholic primary school, was very aware of the leadership in his school, and particularly of that of the head teacher. He was conscious of the impact of its symbolic power and referred to this as he gave examples of how his school leader promoted and transmitted Catholic values:

..there is encouragement for pupils to participate in if you like well first of all Catholic ceremonies. During the month of May we had the Rosary every lunchtime where the Head Teacher attended which was good and other teachers as well. So you have from the Head you have a clear display about her involvement in em you know em prayer activities. Also during Lent, you know our Head Teacher was at mass every day as were a number of teachers and that does take some level of commitment cause ... there is a bit of a distance to travel. So there was that kinda visible representation. Also during assembly she'll say the Rosary and other prayers with the pupils and there is you know you'll see in her office, you know displays of you know we've got a statue of St [the school patron] and you'll see a crucifix and that sort of thing. I'm pretty sure there's a couple of popes in there! Eh so..clearly when you walk in the school you can see that it is a Catholic school. Also I mean the way she shows genuine concern for the pupils is you know definitely a fantastic Christian value that she displays ..the concern she has for pupils and eh parents is fantastic you know. There is one boy in my class who's had a very troubled background and em you know he was coming to school just during the winter time just with a short sleeved shirt on, didn't have a jacket so she got a spare fleece and she gave one to him and said "Tell your mum I know she was going to buy you one anyway but just take that home, you know she can pay it next time she's up" So you think that's really, really kind and you know she looks for things... there was an issue with bullying with some of the girls who were kinda excluding one girl from things and Theresa managed to get her to know other girls that were in a different year, to befriend this one that was being excluded so you know she really does go out of her way to try and build a Catholic community in the school. So it's very impressive yeah.

From this lengthy account of numerous accolades for his head teacher, it becomes apparent that it is not simply the school's commitment to traditional Catholic rituals or features that have had an impact on Paul, but rather the behaviour of the head teacher when engaged in such activities. Her continued presence at early morning mass during Lent and visible displays of religious imagery (witness); her commitment to promoting different prayer activities and to encouraging others to engage in these (worship and word) and her genuine concern for—and service to—the wellbeing of the children in her school (welfare/service) were all mentioned by Paul as noticeable and positive features

of his head teacher's Catholic leadership. His reaction to this, and articulation of the impact it has had on his faith, is noteworthy:

It's very encouraging really with someone that it feels that these values are important, to see it being if you like guided from above in terms of the head teacher so it's quite uplifting for me to see that she's really genuinely concerned to have these values lived in the school and also even in her dealings with staff, it's the same as well. You know you feel you're treated really well, with respect ...you know it's really really good. So she's very very em she does live the Catholic values and she does bring them into the school as well...I would say it's certainly it's encouraged me and it has re affirmed what I believe. I would say I'm actually, I think I might have said to you the last time, that I was pleasantly surprised at the kinda high standard in here coming from you know a non-educational background and I suppose all you really read in the papers are a lot of bad things about schools and at times you wonder what you know what are teachers really like. But in here it's been very very positive.you know where you have staff that are praying together you know attending church, sorry attending mass together and attending mass during Lent and you have this attitude of care and compassion for the pupils it's it's it's really good you know. I think it maybe for you you've been out in the world working you've seen other things that you think you know this isn't such a great place. Coming in here it's em not that I was ever cynical but it certainly brings you back closer to the ideal and so that's been a really good thing.

75% of those placed in the Catholic sector spoke positively about the Catholic leadership that they had encountered during their probationary year but the remaining 25% were critical of the school leadership and, in particular, of the head teacher. Laura's experience was quite unique in that she criticised her head teacher for being *too* Catholic. She referred to him constantly pushing the Catholic faith via RE lessons and continually speaking to children about it but, she argued, this was done in a very academic manner that was 'way over their heads'. Mass was being celebrated in the school on a weekly basis during the school day and the children and staff were all forced to attend. She spoke of him doing things in an 'old fashioned way' and how he turned religion and God into something 'scary'. She commented, 'to be honest with you the leadership in this school just makes you think of how you wouldn't do things... no wonder they don't go to mass!' Laura gave examples of how her school leader treated the children's parents like 'idiots' when they came to the school to discuss First Holy Communion. Working in an area that is exceptionally socially deprived, Laura believed that there was a lack of Catholic ethos in her school, despite that fact that religion and faith were pushed in a particular manner. She revealed that she had taken it upon herself to be proactive in trying to reach out to the children in some way that would promote the Catholic faith:

I'm just trying to educate them more about you know about different things and I took the approach like I don't know how I managed it but I finished Alive-O about six weeks early and eh we've been looking at a different saint every week you know just to kinda get them interested and show them you know these are good people. And showing them as well that you know that many saints came from poor families and had terrible childhoods and upbringings and just trying to show them you know like they don't have to go down that path and especially cause we've had incidents with knives in school and then needles and what not.

While her response could be interpreted in a number of different ways, what is interesting in this instance is Laura's emerging leadership capacity, albeit within a classroom situation. Her pro-activity in trying to engage the children in something that would stimulate their interest in the Catholic faith came as a result of feeling uncomfortable and frustrated by the behaviour of her head teacher and her analysis of the impact that this was having on the children.

Eileen's experience was similar in that she was 'disappointed' with the Catholic leadership in her primary school. She revealed that while prayers were said, Holy Days of Obligation were observed (certain days in the Catholic liturgical calendar requiring members to attend mass) and that a crucifix was visible on the wall, there was not much else in terms of promotion of the Catholic faith. She spoke of a lack of opportunities being provided for the children and how the head teacher should be blamed for not giving children this 'exposure'. Echoing Laura's sentiments, Eileen mentioned that something positive came out of this situation in terms of her having to be proactive to ensure that her expectations are being met:

It's made me more aware that if I go into a school that maybe doesn't have the same support as I've experienced [in previous placements]... you can try organise and take it upon yourself to try and develop it [faith dimension in the school] and then that's your own CPD as well.

Pauline and Patrick's experiences were also negative but for different reasons. Pauline's head teacher imposed certain activities on her staff in a non-collegial or non-collaborative spirit, which provoked an element of resentment towards the head teacher. According to Pauline, her head teacher assumed an authoritarian role within the school, one that was met with much hostility from those working in the school. Anecdotes were given from teachers not being allowed to attend the funeral of a colleague's father, to staff having to buy their own crucifixes for their classrooms, as examples of unsatisfactory leadership. Patrick, on the other

hand, was teaching in a school that was undergoing major upheaval owing to an imminent merger. For this reason he felt that the Catholic dimension of the school was not a priority and so ‘*was not particularly strong*’. He did, however, support his head teacher by referring to other aspects of her leadership that were satisfactory. Interestingly, he too took it upon himself to be proactive in this particular area by introducing a rosary club in the school, a club that has a devotion to Mary, whom Catholics revere as Mother of God.

All of the probationer teachers, who were working in the Catholic sector, were very aware of the Catholic leadership in their schools and were confident in discussing their opinions on this leadership, based on an interpretation of words, actions and of general behaviour.

‘Shared’ Catholic Leadership

When asked directly about the leadership in their schools, many of those interviewed referred instantly as one might expect to the head teacher. However, interestingly, a large number also spoke of other members of staff’s Catholic leadership. Even more significantly, this seemed to occur in the schools where the teachers were most positive about the faith and religious dimension of their working environment. Gemma, when asked about the Catholic leadership in her own school, did not refer directly to the head teacher at any point but spoke of much wider Catholic leadership;

Everything is celebrated. You know feast days are celebrated and em you know prayers, we are all encouraged to say prayers for people doing exams. There’s been a couple of kids in this school who’ve lost their parents and stuff so we got a bulletin round as well we’ve all been asked to pray for their family and you know kids have been allowed to go out to the funeral to support them and this kinda stuff.

She continues;

I feel as though they always encourage you to think of the other person and that’s very much a line that the senior management go down.

In this instance, the responsibility for promoting the school’s Catholicity is not simply that invested in the head teacher. Here a wider range of staff—and indeed the children—appear to have been given some encouragement in promoting the faith dimension of the school. Gemma also refers to a staff retreat that took place

during the year and this was predominantly at the request of—and organised by—non-promoted staff in the school, demonstrating leadership capacity among others.

Mary also alluded to this concept of shared Catholic leadership in her own school context. When revealing her experiences throughout the probationary year, she spoke favourably about her head teacher:

The head teacher is a strong Catholic. Em I think that there are various places that it comes through. I think that when he's talking to the staff, you know it comes through that he is Christian, you know, more specifically Catholic.

However, in addition, she referred to the school's RE department, its Pastoral Care Group and the role of the Chaplain in terms of Catholic leadership. She even spoke of her own leadership role in terms of working with the children within the context of her subject area. For Mary, although she considered the head teacher to be overtly strong in terms of faith leadership, there was recognition that its real impact came from others with whom she worked on a more direct basis:

For me I think it's more, although the head teacher is em strongly Catholic and you know obviously has a strong faith himself, for me it's [leadership] more the people that I relate to on a more day-to-day basis. The Chaplain, you know he's got great interpersonal skills, he's a good guy you know and the RE department are good as well....even in the English department there's a strong feeling that em the way you carry out this Catholic faith that we have you know through our teaching... You know, any leadership I've had hasn't necessarily come from the Senior Management.

This experience aligns with Bolland's (2007) assertion that leadership is not a simple reality since 'every Catholic teacher is called to be a *leader* [sic]' (p91). Others spoke of the wider sense of Catholic leadership in the school—again, leadership that was not simply confined to the role of the head teacher. Interestingly, it was from amongst those in the secondary Catholic school sector that this was most evident—although there were some indications that leadership responsibility had been devolved to some non-senior management members of staff in the primary sector.

This concept of 'shared' or 'collective' leadership is one that has been championed by many commentators for some time, and not just by those

interested in the faith school context. Grace (1995) has highlighted the merits of having a ‘community of leaders’ in a school as opposed to one hierarchical leader and argues that such leadership is considered ‘educative’ as well as ‘managerial’ (p54), where members of staff would be empowered in certain areas and given opportunities to grow and develop. Gold *et al* (2003:134) refer to this as head teachers paying attention to the development of ‘leadership capacity’ in their schools and noticed in their own case study—focussing on the practice of ten ‘outstanding’ principals in England—that when these principals were committed to the development of their staff, to devolving leadership roles, and, indeed, to encouraging staff to consider career progression, many of them responded positively to this challenge and felt trusted and supported in making decisions, trying new things and taking risks (ibid:135).

The development of leadership capacity in a school is also highly symbolic. This, arguably, sends a message to staff about the value placed on them and on their colleagues and has, arguably, the potential to challenge and stimulate motivation among staff including, in particular, those new to the school. Of course, such development or commitment to this area will be subject to interpretation by any staff member. Perhaps not surprisingly however, those interviewed for the purposes of this study who had experienced such devolved leadership, interpreted this positively and the meaning that was taken from observing this in action was that teachers and children in the school were valued and of worth. Indeed, this experience of Catholic leadership capacity being developed amongst staff, most often in an implicit manner, stimulated positive reactions and some interviewees revealed the impact that this had on their own faith. Mary gave a very personal testimony:

Well I was thinking well that my own faith had just kinda dwindled away really and at that point I thought well I don't want to go into that you know some sort of an ethos for people that are very religious and I feel outta that then or feel under pressure to take more part in it. So it has made me think again. Actually the opposite happened. I just felt very included when I came in and there was no pressure on me as a teacher you know. I have chosen to become involved in the kind of spiritual life in the school. You know by helping out if there are retreats or I've approached, I've gone and sat in the RE classes just to see what goes on... [Being here] has actually changed me and I think it definitely has changed my faith. You know I think I grew up with a feeling of guilt that if I wasn't really practicing. Now its just a feeling that if I go to mass its because I want to be there. That's really liberating for me. And that I actually really love that ethos within the school. And I do feel that it has a major impact on me and then on the pupils.

5.4.3 Community

The concept of ‘community’ emerged as an important part of the teachers’ experience in their first year of their career, both from those who experienced a strong sense of this in their working environment and conversely, from those who did not. What was revealing from this round of interviews was the evidence provided by the respondents of the impact that ‘community’ could have on their faith. Much of what emerged aligned very much to the literature presented in the earlier stages of this section.

Faith development

Those who had given examples of poor Catholic leadership in their schools also, for the most part, spoke of a lack of community within the school and presented a correlation between this and the nature of the leadership. Eileen commented;

It doesn't feel like a Catholic school... there's not much unity in the school...it's full of individuals. Its not like a community. I think we need to have a community. We need to have a whole school feel...like the Church is all about community. It's about doing things as a community. Not necessarily praying but actually doing things as a community... and this is supposed to reflect community and the Catholic ethos is supposed like sort of prevail throughout. But em this school isn't a community therefore the Catholic ethos is just lacking completely. It's been lost somewhere. I don't know if it was ever like that. I don't know...I mean the children aren't seeing the teachers getting on so if the teachers aren't getting on, how are they supposed to?...if there was more whole school things and more community things based, they'd probably get on better.

She believed that working in such an environment had no impact on her faith.

Anything that I have had, any impact that has happened was in other placements. Either up to here or University. This has not had any impact. I'm actually really disappointed... and for the children. I feel as if they're lacking so much.

What is striking here is Eileen’s clear understanding of what the institutional Church has to say about the role of the Catholic school and its role in representing the Church. In addition, it is apparent that she is confident in articulating her analysis of the situation in her school with regard to the promotion of the Catholic faith and in her ability to suggest a solution. Eileen spoke of how her interpretation of the situation she was in, impacted on her own faith.

For those who considered that they had encountered a positive experience in terms of the promotion of the Catholic or faith dimension in their school, there was evidence to suggest that this was synonymous with an established sense of community within their working environments. Many examples have been recorded and can be found in the interview transcripts but the accounts of Marie and Joseph are illustrative of the kind of experiences encountered. Marie, an English teacher in a large city centre Catholic school, enjoyed the sense of community in her workplace and she admitted it had a positive impact on her own faith. She attributed this establishment of a good sense of community to the school's historical background and also its leadership.

You know em this school wasn't actually supposed to exist. It was supposed to be closed down so em but it was because the community wanted it to stay and wanted it to be a Catholic school and wanted a place where children would be taught using the Catholic ethos. I think because of that, it is a very Catholic school. You know strong links with the Church up the road, strong links with the Community, with the Chaplain, with the Oratory. Em you know with having our own school prayer and encouraging the children persistently, you know to think about things. Em as far as the Head Teacher himself goes, he's very strong in leading his staff and his pupils in prayer through assemblies or through school masses and you know he's always there which means he's leading from the top. Not like he goes right we've got a mass because it's a holiday of obligation but if there is a school mass on he is there. He is standing at the front and he's leading from the top. Which at least means the children are seeing how important it is to him and as well because there's such a good sense of community in this school. The kids know how important it is that this school exists for them so they do appreciate but it's very, but there's a very strong Catholic ethos in the school yeah.... You know from your line manager, from your mentor and from the head teacher and I suppose you look at the Head and you look at the way the head teacher and how they care about the school. It's quite, it makes it quite important to you that you do the same. I've a lot of respect for the head teacher of this school and I have a lot of respect for the teachers that I work with them and I think because of that you want to try your very best. ... as far as faith goes, you're encouraged because it's such a Catholic school. I went to a convent school and you know and you sort of lapse after a while and you go I've spent so long in a Catholic school. I wasn't even that fussed whether I got one or not for this year. When you do go into it, you do find yourself getting more involved because the head teacher expects that of you. It's part of your job. Em and although it may start out as a bit of a chore, eventually it's quite, it's quite nice you know because as well the masses aren't held in the school. We go down to the Church. Its like a wee trip and everyone walks back from the Church together so it's a chance again to get a better bond with the pupils and the other members of staff.

She also highlighted an example of a committee—consisting of a variety of staff—charged with the responsibility of developing faith and learning in the school. This emphasised the promotion of the school's organisational values that were clearly accepted by those in the school. Although Marie was not a member of this committee, she was aware of its remit and of its underpinning philosophy—one that she appeared to embrace:

It discusses how we can bring more into the school. Rather than just saying to the kids right this is your RE class timetabled twice a week and this is the day you have to go to mass. There you go. How you can make faith to be something that's consistently in the school rather than being designated for fifty minutes twice a week because it really should be something that exists the whole time...Like the way you should behave or how you should treat other people.

When asked about any impact that the community dimension to the school may have had on her faith, she responded;

It's sort of strengthened it generally because it's where you're in touch with people who know more about it as well... It also keeps you up to date. My mum used to always have to phone me and tell me when Holy Days of Obligation were. She'd phone me and say what you doing? Did you go to mass today? Like why? And she'd tell me but now I actually know. So sometimes I phone her just to annoy her.

Joseph's experience was similar to that of Marie's in that he valued the fact that he worked in a faith community-orientated environment. Completing his probationary year in a suburban primary school, a range of examples were given that conveyed that members of staff in the school were working towards a common purpose and were supportive of one another when doing so. Again, the leadership in the school was considered responsible for establishing this. He gave an example of a decision taken by those leading the school which sent a clear message to him about the kind of values being promoted in the school:

On Ascension Thursday [a holy day of obligation for Catholics], we had an in-service day and there was like a few discussions throughout the authority that going to mass wasn't really an appropriate CPD activity. But the senior management team stuck to their guns and were like well it's part of being a Catholic teacher, so it's not you know often that we do get a chance to share like a mass together, without you know like going with the kids. They said it was really important.

Joseph gave other examples of symbolic interactions from the senior management in the school that he claims sent a strong message to himself and others regarding the school's culture:

They show like you know reverence for anything that we're about. They don't you know come in the middle of morning prayers or you know if they've got something to say they wait you know outside until everything's settled down...they were an excellent support as well in the lead up to my interview, even just the wee kinda comment oh well like in assembly you know we'll all be praying for you and stuff. But, you know that they mean it. It's not just that, you know they're not just saying that so em... they do a lot and they always send around, well I've only been here a year and don't really know, but like such- n-such's dad or mum, if it's been an ex-member of staff or something, or they always send around notes you know if there's anything that they're wanting you know to pray for especially. Em and they are really handy with the church over the road as well.

The priest's always in here talking to them and they're always coming round with the priest.

Joseph conveyed how that kind of leadership impacted on the rest of the staff and how a strong sense of community was present, where communal values were lived:

...the Senior Management Team are really supportive and everyone's supportive of each other. We support each other and just use each other's kind of strength and stuff and em even if someone's not feeling great one day, they'll be like well you know if you're wanting to you know maybe want us to do something else with them or well it's my own time but if you just go home and I'll you know cover your class for half an hour an stuff. I'm not brave enough to say that yet but (laughs) em you know that's the kinda thing they do and like you know they really look after each other.

He spoke of how this encouraged people to work together and how they responded by actively contributing to the life of the school:

The First Holy Communion stuff ...you had like five or six members of staff that were Eucharistic Ministers and another member of staff like playing the organ and another one you know helping with the readers, showing them where to go and stuff and just general crowd control em. But you know stuff like that and then it does give you a chance after it to get to know each other out with you know fifteen minutes or you know a quick lunchtime were you're correcting loads of stuff. Things like that.

In terms of the impact that this had on Joseph's faith, he shared:

it's just really consolidated my faith because I've always you know been fairly quite a strong believer but its quite similar to my own home environment where it's like a close knit community ... it's just like the staff's really close knit as well...I do feel at home with the ethos that it's got..

5.4.4 Commentary

First and foremost these interviews have revealed that those participating in this study had embarked on a thorough socialisation process in their schools. The majority of them were very confident when explaining the day-to-day running of their schools and were able to give their own views on various events and procedures, criticising practices when they felt necessary. It is worth noting that a relationship was at this point fully established between the interviewee and the interviewer so a stronger degree of trust was present, which may be attributed to the participants being more open. It was, however, their depth of interpretation of events and behaviours in their working environment and their ability to see the implications of these that was most striking, revealing that a more profound level

of engagement had occurred at this stage in their career. The core category, *Socialisation: finding a voice*, given to this particular stage in the research reflects this. The answers of the teachers to the questions were much more comprehensive and detailed, indicating greater awareness of the issues being discussed. In addition, when dissatisfaction was evident, participants' analysis of the situations included causes and indeed solutions, illustrating an increased level of confidence.

Symbolism: recognition and response

This round of results has focused primarily on the behaviours of the school leaders, particularly with regard to the values that are promoted within the schools and the manner in which these values are transmitted to others. The impact of this was also analysed. Communication became a primary focus along with the symbolic interactions of school leaders on a daily basis. What became apparent very quickly is that individual teachers *do* attribute meaning to the actions and words of others and, in particular of their leaders, and that this can have a significant impact on their own practice. Denise and Francesca's example illustrated this: they were not told directly what was expected of them but their interpretation of their leaders' words and actions within the working day nevertheless led them to certain conclusions and influenced their future behaviour. What was most interesting was the impact that this could have on their engagement with, or development of, their faith. As exhibited earlier through the example of Denise, the manner in which the head teacher projects him/herself in their daily interactions in school can result in a commitment from staff to ensure that they attend Mass as regularly as possible. The powerful nature of this is striking and it raises questions as to how aware school leaders are of the impact of their words and actions. Indeed, the values of leaders are transmitted and interpreted in such a way, as illustrated in Joseph's example, that it would be important for all leaders—and indeed others—to be made aware of the impact of their behaviours, if and where this is not already the case. Recognition by leaders of this influential power is required since teachers—and in particular those that are newly qualified—very quickly attribute their own meaning to what has been heard and observed. In addition, however, a measured response is required on the part of those being led—an awareness of, and ability

to interpret, leaders' behaviour should perhaps be a skill upon which newly qualified teachers should focus. The danger exists, of course, that this kind of interaction can become contrived, resulting in leaders, and indeed others, becoming unduly self-conscious about everything they do, thereby stifling creativity and natural, spontaneous behaviour—which will of course also transmit particular values. While this outcome must be strenuously avoided, it would nonetheless be considered important for Catholic leaders to receive significant input on symbolic leadership, in order to raise their awareness of its power.

Shared leadership and leadership capacity.

It emerged from this round of data that, in the schools where probationers were most positive about the promotion of any Catholic or faith dimension, it was not perceived as the responsibility of the head teacher alone, but rather that of a number of people in the school, working towards a common goal. Participants spoke of being aware of Catholic leadership from members of different subject departments, from the RE department (in secondary schools), from members of the senior management, from the Chaplain and even, in one instance, from children. While it is recognised that this devolved responsibility was, most often, ultimately guided by the head teacher, the commitment from members of non-senior management staff, and the impact and sometimes knock-on effect that this had on some of the probationers was revealing. Three of the probationers indicated that they had become involved in faith-related initiatives in the school while others were more proactive in terms of attending voluntary religious services or being involved in parish based ministries, all of which demonstrate 'witness'—arguably a leadership quality in itself. The effect of this shared leadership appeared to be the contribution to a wider sense of community in the school, where shared values were being promoted throughout their working day by a variety of people in different positions. Indeed, the interview data indicated a correlation between this shared responsibility and the establishment of a sense of community and some participants referred to this directly. Interestingly, the concept of devolved Catholic leadership was most evident in secondary schools, which is perhaps unsurprising when the ability to direct and instil Catholic values in a much larger environment may be considered more of a challenge.

While the development of Catholic leadership capacity amongst staff was predominantly associated in the schools where the probationers were *satisfied* with the direction of their head teacher and of the promotion of the Catholic faith, it was not confined to these environments and it also appeared in schools where the probationers were *less* than happy with the direction of their head or senior management. Laura and Diane illustrated how they took on leadership roles, albeit within the classroom situation, when they interpreted the behaviour of their head teacher and others in the school to be inadequate or less than effective in the promotion of the Catholic faith. Recognising a deficiency in this area, and assessing the influence that this was having on the children in their classes, both teachers were proactive in taking it upon themselves to update themselves and give witness to their faith in their classroom situations as much as possible. Additional lessons with appropriate resources were introduced in an attempt to raise an awareness of central features of the Catholic tradition and engage the children with their faith.

This presentation of results for this stage in the research has said little about the formal CPD faith development opportunities in which these probationers were or were not engaged. This has been intentional. Indeed, some concrete examples—admittedly very limited—*were* given by probationers, detailing courses that they had attended or retreats that they had embarked upon that had a specific focus on their own faith. What has emerged from this round and indeed from the previous round of interviews, however, is the impact that informal opportunities can have on the faith of staff and that have contributed to their overall professional development. There may be some difficulty for this to be labelled as CPD, but this research is suggesting that such opportunities and experiences for staff can have a significant impact on their professional development and, in the case of these probationer teachers, contribute to establishing them as competent and confident teachers with a clear sense of identity and purpose within their immediate educational establishment and beyond.

5.5 'Stage Four - The Catholic teacher: authentic witness to faith.'

*Mere knowledge **about** God must be distinguished from knowledge **of** God.'*

(Holmer, 1978:25)

The final stage of the research involving the main focus group of the study occurred ten months after the previous round of data collection. Of the twenty-one teachers who were interviewed in their probationary year, seventeen agreed to be interviewed for this final stage in the research. (The remaining four could either not be contacted or did not respond to the invitation.) The interviews took place during the summer term of the participants' first year as fully qualified teachers. All had successfully completed their probationary year and, at this stage, were in posts that were either on a temporary (supply), fixed term or permanent basis. Thirteen teachers were teaching in the Catholic sector and four in the nondenominational sector. Analysis of the interviews was conducted in the same way as before. However, at this juncture it was also important to draw on the data from the previous stages in order to create—and, indeed examine—the fuller picture.

As the methodology section in the thesis conveys, the longitudinal nature of this study allowed for new categories and concepts to be discovered and explored at each stage of the process. As Strauss and Corbin (1998) recognise, however, saturation can occur when no new knowledge or information emerges from the data as a result of the coding process. While this did appear to be the situation at stage four—evident in the manner in which the pace of the development of new categories slowed down quite considerably—density was nonetheless being added to *existing* categories. For example, the categories, *symbolic leadership*, *community-impact on faith* were further developed and were reaching saturation. The *Catholic teacher's role* and *identity* categories continued to be developed and were indicating a change in behaviour and attitude of some participants, which were in turn having an impact on their professional and personal lives.

This particular stage in the process aimed to explore the participants' perceptions of themselves, personally and professionally, as fully qualified Catholic teachers,

but also to provide an opportunity for reflection on the findings for both the participants and researcher. Some of the central themes to emerge from the whole study were incorporated into the questions and shared with the participants. This assisted in checking the emerging hypotheses, increasing their overall validity. The questions for this stage also revisited some of the areas that were explored during the first round of interviews—when the participants were students—enabling the researcher to explore further any significant shifts in attitude and behaviour (Appendix 4). The results, then, for this stage in the study—the last involving its main focus group—reveal findings that develop further or summarise those of the previous stages.

The core category given to this final stage in the research concerning the main group of participants was *Catholic teachers: witnesses to faith* and was so called because of the significant response of individuals when asked, at this juncture in their career, to define their own role in the Catholic school context. With one exception, every participant commented on the need to communicate faith to children in their care in an authentic manner. Justification for their understanding of this role was also presented, based primarily on their own experiences. A confidence in articulating their own views was developing and was noticeable among most—illustrating further the professional voice that these teachers had adopted or ‘found’ through the socialisation process upon which they had embarked.

Three sub-categories best explain the variations that exist within the core category *Catholic teachers: witnesses to faith*, and these have drawn upon the findings from this round of data and the previous categories from the earlier stages. The sub-categories have been entitled; *faith development*, *understanding of role* and *professional development needs*. Each sub-category contains discrete concepts that will be presented in this section and are illustrated in *figure 5.4*

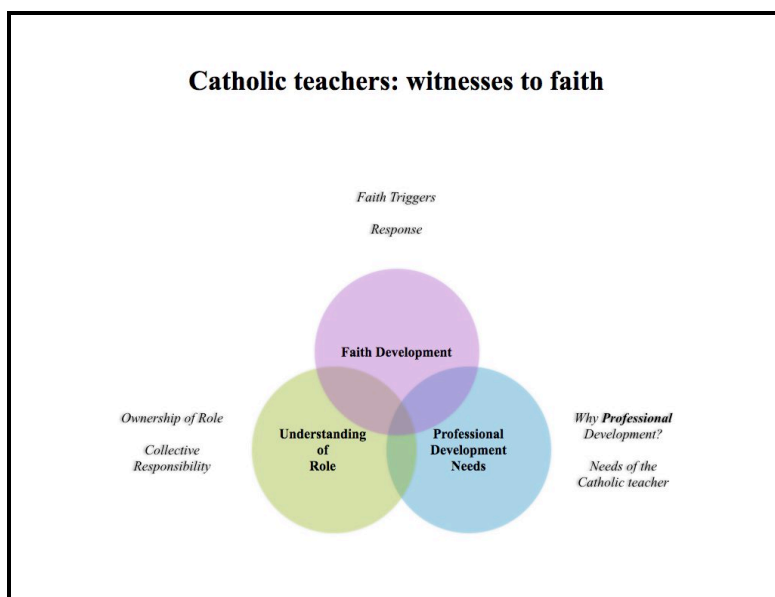


Figure 5.4: Stage Four: Key Categories and their Concepts

5.5.1 Faith development.

Within the context of this study, 71% of those participating commented that there had been a change in their faith since embarking on a career in teaching. With one exception, all of those agreeing that there had been a change in faith explained that, from their perspectives, this had been a positive development. Different reasons were given for this change or development in faith, and the extent to which it was impacting on their own lives varied quite considerably, depending on their own faith identities and starting positions. Some participants admitted being confident in their faith at the start of this study, prior to embarking on a career in Catholic education, while others had displayed levels of anxiety and were categorised as being '*faith insecure*'. The first round of interviews revealed that their individual historical narratives had shaped their identities and contributed to their own faith positions. Some participants displayed stronger attachments to the Catholic tradition and Catholic faith than their peers but, in some instances, without considering or reflecting on why this was the case.

All participants were on their own faith journeys and the distance they had already travelled and the confidence that they were showing in their faith and understanding of it, varied from person to person. It is a significant finding, however, that the large majority of these participants, now fully qualified,

detailed a *development* in their faith position since becoming a Catholic teacher and many attributed this directly to their work. What follows is further exploration of this phenomenon.

Faith 'Triggers'

Astley (2004) claims that 'religion only really exists...in the context of a religious response' (p402). He argues that it is only when people interpret and respond to a particular tradition that make religions fulfil their intrinsic promise; that is, only when they 'effect change in what is other than themselves' (ibid:403). Astley (2004) continues by distinguishing between a cognitive religious response and one that is primarily a behavioural commitment—the latter, he argues, being more significant. He comments, 'religion is 'tried and tested' by those who embrace it; religious norms point to things that have been found to 'work' in the hearts, souls and lives of believers, as well as (and more significantly than) in their minds' (p402). In exploring different responses to religion and levels of faith, Astley (2004) also discusses the meaning of 'depth' in the context of 'faith'. Drawing on the work of Phillips (1993), he again emphasises the significance of understanding—and indeed elevating—behavioural responses over those that are cognitive:

The deeper meaning is not to be thought of as a more intellectually sophisticated or technical, inner cognitive core of faith...The depth metaphor should make us think rather of a '*spiritually* deep (and only in that sense 'sophisticated') level of religious being and religious believing, belonging, behaving and speaking. Uncovering this deeper sense involves *seeing the point of religion* (in this example, under the aspect of religious success); it is a matter of grasping what the religious perspective really means, what it is 'getting at' – and thus truly 'getting it' (Astley, 2004:407).

Astley refers to aspects of faith development in two modes: that of the 'third-person' and of 'the first-person' (ibid:412). The former is when 'belief' is about accepting something that is taught by another, whereas the latter is when this 'belief' is transformed into something that is more authentically owned by the individual. 'When this happens there is a deeper, fuller religious understanding that is "not just a matter of words alone"'(ibid). The following analogy is presented to exemplify this assertion: someone may understand and indeed learn the language of 'love', and use it or recognise it in others. This, however, is very

different from learning what ‘love’ is by actually *being* in love (ibid). Wittgenstein (1980) helps with understanding this concept further:

A religious belief could only be something like a passionate commitment to a system of reference...It’s passionately seizing hold of this interpretation. Instruction in a religious faith, therefore, would have to take the form of a portrayal, a description of that system of reference, while at the same time being an appeal to conscience. And this combination would have the result in the pupil himself, of his own accord, passionately taking hold of the system of reference.

For many of the participants interviewed in this study, the development or ‘change’ in their faith that they had recorded, was as a result of certain experiences—or the accumulation of such—that they had encountered over the first two years of their professional career. These encounters had resulted in engaging more with, or becoming more aware of, their faith and this, they claimed themselves, had a direct influence on their thoughts and behaviour. When asked about this ‘change’ or development in faith, many of the respondents spoke of what will be referred here as ‘faith triggers’—happenings or an accumulation of occurrences that initiated change. For some, these faith triggers had much to do with their personal circumstances. Joseph, for example, commented that getting married and moving from his parental home had affected his faith:

It’s different. It’s a lot more individual because like I’ve moved out of my mum and dad’s and I don’t get to go with them as much to church.. but it’s like out on my own a wee bit...It’s almost like I’m a lot more grown up about issues... it’s kind of strange because even when you’re like in your twenties and stuff, you still like, your mum’s like, you know if you’ve been maybe out or something and you’re like what is he like come on let’s go[to church]. Em so you’ve got to be an awful lot more responsible about it.

Andrew also spoke of two changes in his personal and work circumstances that ‘triggered’ a change in his faith. He revealed that moving to the non-denominational sector had affected his awareness of this:

I would say it’s [his faith] stronger actually. Em I don’t know if that’s consciously or subconsciously because I’m in a non-denominational school, but em it might also just be like moving house and getting married as well em just more of a kind of commitment, more responsibility I suppose. ... I’ve not had any involvement in any religious or moral education here or at the same time, seen or heard of any religious and moral education so it might be a case like I’m actively trying to find more myself, to be part of it cause it’s definitely something I find in Catholic schools that obviously you’re immersed in it and it is like the ethos of the school so it’s not that hard to maybe look for it cause it’s there all the time.

For others, there was a direct correlation between changes in faith and teaching in the Catholic school. Brenda, a secondary teacher, spoke openly about her faith journey over the last few years. She commented;

...it was good and then it went a wee bit phased but now I feel like it's coming back much better. I think it's moving being in a Catholic school cause obviously for my probation I wasn't in a Catholic school so I still I don't know, I think maybe it had went a wee bit but I didn't realize it at the time because I wasn't in a Catholic school and then coming to a Catholic school, and just hearing the way people speak, I'm thinking I know I like this. This is what I should have been able to talk the way they can, cause I agree with what they're saying things.

She continued, explaining how she now felt 'guilty' about missing Mass and how she made an effort to attend Mass in the school as regularly as possible. The faith 'trigger' for Brenda was being back in a Catholic environment where she was reminded of her faith on a daily basis and felt comfortable with that.

Diane's experience was very different. Looking back over the last two years she spoke at length of how teaching RE in a Catholic environment, and praying on a daily basis in school, had affected her life:

I feel now that since I've left uni and as I've been in school and just talking about religion everyday, I feel as if my faith's getting stronger. Yeah I feel as if I'm more of a committed Catholic, I'm more aware of portraying like sort a the values and I'm trying to fit into my life everyday we're praying and we're saying extra prayers. I've got the class quite religious in a way like em we've deviated from Alive-O this year and explored the Old Testament which has helped me as well cause I've learned so much from it and discussed with the children and been linking it to em like stories that they already know, bible stories that they've heard in the past and like situation in the world today like politics and I'm bringing in other religions so I feel as if exploring that with the children's helping me develop my own faith plus I'm more committed to going to Mass and things like that whereas at uni, I faltered quite a few times em but now I feel as if I am more committed to my religion and there's a definite purpose to it. Especially with the power of prayer. I feel as if the power of prayer is a lot stronger now because our class have been, I've known quite a lot of people over the past year that have cancer and we've been saying a lot of prayers and the amount of people that we've said prayers for have actually got better and the children as well so I feel as if the power of prayer really does help. It's making me more committed and strengthening my own faith.

Mary's declared development in faith was revealing. She spoke of a well-considered response, based on much discernment about choosing to teach in the Catholic sector, which had resulted in her stronger commitment to faith.

I've had to think about my own faith because I had to be sincere if I was gonna teach RE for instance. You know, you can't choose to work in a Catholic school and decide not to be fully part of that system, but for me at that point I had to decide one way or another. It's the only way I could be. So at that point I started to become a bit more committed to my own faith and I mean I suppose you know there's sort of peaks and troughs in that as

well. But at the moment I remain committed to it, I remain, I can only be in a classroom if I can be myself and be sincere about what I do. So I can't teach pupils about faith unless I can show what it means to me. You know so that's what I've found recently. I don't, when I think one of the things that probably comes over is I don't feel like the most religious person in the world but I do have a commitment to it. I do believe in Catholic Education and tied that in with my own faith you know through the church.

Mary's 'trigger' in strengthening her faith was the support of her peers in her working environment.

I think it has strengthened me in my own faith. You know ...it would be easy to leave that [faith] in a separate place and come in and just do the job and go away again. But I think it really does help, it is a support for me to know that I'm working with people who have the same values as me. Em and who are prepared to share that with the pupils that we're working with. I really think it strengthens me and I think is a strength in a department.

A theme re-emerging from this round of interviews was that of the impact of strong Catholic ethos and symbolic leadership on the faith of some teachers. Marie exemplified this, recognising that the Catholic environment in which she taught triggered a change in her faith:

It's [faith] developed quite a bit being in a very Catholic school like I said like you do have a lot more Masses and a lot more em structured religion and plus the morning starts with prayers and there's prayers throughout the day, so you do find yourself, you get into the habit more, a habit that you might have dropped out of, you now are back into the religious habits so to speak. I deliberately go to Mass more on a Sunday. Do you know what I mean? Where you actually go well I'm up so I may as well go and I live quite close so I do. That has been as a result of probably where I am.

She continues by speaking about the positive impact that the actions of the head teacher and the overall school ethos and community have on her faith:

it sort of reminds you of things. It's very sort of em ...it reminds, you know things that you might take for granted, you cannot take for granted anymore. As so far as the prayers every day go, it's actually quite nice and it's quite, it's nice for the children cause the children are like say your grandmother was ill, he will say a prayer for you know if you say to him, he says a prayer for it over the tannoy praying for things. It's actually quite a nice idea. You know and there is a lot of support for that. It's quite good and it does make it stronger because you do sort of realize the em the positive effect that this has cause it is quite, it brings the school together. It's something you know regardless of uniform whatever it is, something that sets the school apart and so brings it together.

This view was echoed by others, exemplifying that some sort of faith development had taken place as a direct result of working in a Catholic school environment. Some struggled to articulate this and had not given it much thought although they shared that they were aware that there was a change in their behaviour or thoughts. For others, however, there were much more specific and

concrete examples given which illustrated their own awareness of a change in faith and where a premeditated response to develop this further had taken place. Some discussed the impact that prayer had on them, while one actually spoke about how his job deepened his understanding of God. Paul explained how his dealings with children on a daily basis had affected his faith;

I would say that has deepened my understanding of God and also this feeling when you're doing the right thing, then you're more in communion with God and you feel more fulfilled and a happier person... I would say as well having prepared the children for Holy Communion, which is the first time I've done it, that strengthened my faith to some extent as well.

There is evidence to suggest that those teaching in overtly Catholic environments have had their 'matrix of sources of spiritual capital' (Grace, 2002:237) strengthened, particularly apparent for those who were categorised as being less confident in their faith in the earlier stages of the research. It can also be argued that many of these teachers' 'personal frames of reference' (Janssens, 2004: 147)—alluded to in the first stage of results—seem to have altered. What has become apparent then, in some cases, is a *sharing* of these frames of reference where people in the same environment eventually hold the same—or at least congruent—views. As highlighted earlier, Janssens (2004) claims that this alignment of individuals' personal frames of reference can contribute significantly to establishing an organisational culture, and vice versa.

In this study, changes to individuals' frames of reference appear to be more apparent in those who were categorised in the earlier stages as being 'faith insecure' in relation to their role in the Catholic school. Brenda's situation illustrates this, where we read of how, when she moved from the nondenominational sector back into the Catholic school, she responded positively to the way colleagues were speaking there, and to what they were saying, and in particular to their unified responses or reactions to inappropriate behaviour or communication from the pupils. She gave an example of such reactions: '*they'd all be absolutely horrified whereas I'm horrified as well and I think this is good that everyone is horrified, because in other schools it would just go past.*' She realised that she wanted to be a part of that culture to which they belonged. Marie's situation also exemplifies this influence to her 'personal frame of reference'. She admitted at the beginning of this study that she did not

always attend Mass regularly and that she initially took part in the religious life of the school simply to be ‘seen’ to be involved. This position, she admitted, had changed and we have just read of her enjoying being a part of the religious life of the school and being proactive in her own faith position. She revealed how impressed she had been with the faith leadership she had experienced in her school, and she noted that this had affected her faith and her behaviour directly.

Only one teacher spoke of his faith taking a ‘dip’ since commencing his career in the Catholic primary sector. Interestingly this revelation came from Patrick, someone who was categorised as ‘*faith confident*’ in the early stages of the study. Patrick was actively involved in his Church and admitted that his faith was central to his life. He ensured that praying—both personally and with his family—was a core part of his day. When asked about his faith at this final stage in the research, he revealed that he had been struggling with his job and had found the first two years very difficult in terms of keeping up-to-date with his work. In addition, his wife was about to give birth to their fourth child and this was taking up much of his time at home. He admitted that his prayer life had taken a ‘*back seat*’ and, as a result, he was feeling guilty. What has happened here is that some of Patrick’s personal faith rituals have been crowded out by other work-related responsibilities. The ‘dip’ in faith that he talked about could arguably be interpreted as a *strengthening* of faith since it has resulted in him becoming even more aware of the place of faith rituals and worship in his professional life.

Of the four participants teaching in the nondenominational sector at this stage in their careers, three commented how this had affected their faith. They had all spent their probationary year in the Catholic sector and had recognised a significant difference in experience. While all three spoke of their enjoyment in teaching in the nondenominational sector, they also highlighted the effect that this was having on their faith. Pauline commented;

...even like things like sacraments and like prayers every day that you just take for granted when you’re in the Catholic school. You don’t do them and it’s easily forgotten. It was just last night I was sitting thinking, I don’t do this anymore, I don’t do that, because it’s just not part of your daily routine in school.

Ed had spent his probationary year in the nondenominational sector. In his first year as a fully qualified teacher, however, he was on the supply register and was in and out of both Catholic and nondenominational schools. When he was interviewed for this particular stage in the study, he had been teaching in the same nondenominational school for a few months. While he was enjoying his time there, he claimed that it was not having any impact on his faith. He did note, however, that being in the Catholic school had a markedly different effect:

I find it very much reinforced it [faith]. I actually began to look forward to assembly cause it goes on throughout a whole year. But it began to mean something to me. Like even the prayers for that particular school, were particular to the school, the hymn that was made for that school. Learning that, learning the tune of it, em so that every time there was a Mass, it was sung.

This study has revealed then that a large majority of the participants, teaching in the Catholic sector, claimed that a change in faith occurred since they commenced teaching and, for the most part, this had been a positive development. This change had been instigated or ‘triggered’ by personal circumstances, working in a Catholic environment on a daily basis (particularly where there appeared to exist strong Catholic leadership), or a mixture of both. The participants’ *response* to this supposed ‘change’ will now be discussed.

Response

The participants’ *response* to their change in faith position differed from person-to-person, and again this depended on their own personal circumstances and levels of commitment. What is significant, however, is that the majority of them indicated a difference in their behaviour or thought and some even referred to this directly.

Many of the teachers who had been placed in schools that they considered to be strong in promoting the Catholic faith, revealed that they were engaged much more in the liturgical life of the school and, for many, this was on a voluntary basis. Rosary clubs, Mass during Advent and Lent or at lunchtimes at other times in the year were being attended and, on occasion, even organised by those participating in the study. A majority revealed that they were praying much more than before even in addition to the prayers that were being said on a daily basis in the classroom. Three discussed their previously irregular attendance at

Sunday Mass and how they were making a conscious effort to ensure that this was becoming a regular feature of their week. A minority spoke of an awareness of out-of-school faith-related activities or ministries in which they were becoming involved. Denise was hoping to help with the Children's Liturgy in her parish, while Paul was reading at Sunday Mass. Helen spoke of how she was actively trying to 'improve' her faith by 'practising what I'm preaching'. She explained that she was trying to go to Confession more and attend Mass during the week, but that sometimes family commitments and the amount of work from school didn't always allow her to 'give it the place it should be given'.

In Diane's case, her Church had closed since it was at the centre of a murder inquiry and she admitted that its closure had affected her since she had come to rely on the Sunday sermon of her parish priest for insight into the readings so that she could bring this back into her class. She said,

The church is closed. It's been closed since the end of September. Em so em we no longer have a parish priest and I felt as if he had a lot to do with my faith development in what he said. All the different links between all the different readings and he just em just cleared everything up. Sometimes the language of the readings are quite hard and he broke it all down into simple terms. And he would bring in so much more from everywhere else and his experiences and he'd been here and seen this and this is how it related to and that's what I've taken actually into the classroom this year just from what I've been hearing from him.

Diane spoke of her frustration in actively trying to find a parish where the priest was as effective.

These examples focus primarily on the most striking accounts of proactive and increased engagement of participants with faith or faith related-activities. While it is important to point out again that the levels of involvement or change in faith differed from person to person, all of those participating did detail some sort of transformation and, for some—such as Marie and Diane—this had a substantial impact on their lives.

It is generally accepted that when educating children within a faith context 'seeds of faith can be awakened, nourished and developed' (Cunnane, 2004:90). It seems that this is also apparent for *teachers* working within such environments.

5.5.2 Understanding of Role

During the final round of interviews, each teacher was asked what he or she considered the role of the Catholic teacher to be. With one exception, the answer was unanimous: to be a witness to faith.

The role of the Catholic teacher is to live and teach the Word of God [Diane]

To set an example [Helen]

Being proud of your faith and living with your faith...something that's constantly in your life, not just something that you file away to come back to at a later date. It's a constant thing. [Maire]

To show the link between all the kind of doctrine and to show how to actually live it, and live it out and give them chances to live it out... [Joseph]

It is definitely to model your life and definitely show them well yes, I go to Mass...It is important to show them that it affects my life do you know, not just in the setting of the half hour RE a day, but to show it in the whole of your life... It is a way of life... [Julie]

This articulation of their role had developed quite considerably from when they commenced their probationary period. As illustrated in the results from stage two of this study, *From Theory to Practice*, the participants were very conscious of a lack of any formal or informal faith opportunities that many of their children were experiencing outwith the Catholic school environment. Understanding of their role on the part of many of the teachers had changed from *helping* children on their own faith journeys to *introducing* children to the Catholic faith—in essence, to ‘evangelise’. This round of interviews developed this concept further, highlighting how a large number of participants had arrived at this understanding of their responsibility, and appeared committed to it.

Ownership of role

The manner in which the participants discussed the role of the Catholic teacher at this stage in the research was significantly different from when they were first asked to do so, not only in terms of what they considered their role to be, but also the confident way in which they were able to articulate this and indeed justify their response. Many of them drew on their experiences, referring to their own classroom situations or from what they had learned from others—particularly the leadership—in the school. It is clear that a development had occurred in their understanding of this role and it is argued here that this is because many of them

at this stage now had *ownership* of this role. Paul's understanding of his role was made clear and his justification for this was based on his own experiences;

...it's emphasized to me more how important Catholic schools are in the sense of em quite a number of pupils really have no contact with the Church or very limited contact em and therefore, if they didn't have some sort of Catholic teaching in school, then effectively they wouldn't have any teaching at all after you know even if half of them do go to Mass, it means half of them don't em, which is a lot of children effectively if their parents aren't teaching them anything, which if they're not going to church, then you've got to say what is the commitment to Christianity then if they weren't coming here and doing Alive-O and hearing prayers and seeing us and hearing what we have to say, then really em you know they'd be looking for another basis on which to live their life

Julie's understanding of her role was also based on her experiences. The manner in which she explained this arguably demonstrates her belief and conviction in what she considers to be her responsibility:

I will kneel down when we kneel and you know I'll make them kneel down, stand up, sit down, and genuflect and all those kind of things but they just don't know, they don't get and I think it's so important at some points, you're the only person that's teaching them anything about being Catholic. There's no priest involvement because, unless we take them to Mass because they don't go, so they don't listen, they don't hear that, they don't hear anything at home and this is all they get and that's why I think Catholic schools are so important as well even if they don't, their parents don't practise their faith so I think it's important to show that that affects my life do you know and to use it, not just in the setting of the half hour RE a day, but to show it in the whole of your life and the way that you act and treat people and all of that kind of thing, and show them that's it's not just something that you either believe in God or you don't. It's a way of life.

Laura, a Primary Six permanent teacher in the Catholic sector, revealed the impact she believed she had on some children's behaviour as a result of her faith-witness. This, she claimed, clarified how important her role actually is:

I've kind of changed a few of them you know cause like I'd say you know I went to prayer groups and my class really like me and em you know so a few of them are kind of coming round and they'll come into me sometimes and say "we went to Mass" on Saturday night you know a crowd of them and I think that once you kind of manage to get through to them in that way, then you can maybe start thinking about what your next steps are. . I mean like one of the boys who...you know anything I do he'll do sort of thing... if I say to him I go to half six Mass on a Sunday night. I mean he's been to half six Mass on a Sunday night now for you know however many weeks and that's you know been off his own back.

Laura's commitment to developing the children in this area was evident:

...it takes a while you know and the children are quite hard to get through to and part of me, I would really like to have primary seven next year because I've done an awful lot of work with half the primary sixes and if they were to be in my class I feel as though I've got the kind of foundation relationship with them already and I would love to be able to kind of take them on further.

Overall, the majority of participants conveyed a much more definite understanding of their role as Catholic teachers and this was vindicated by investigation of a variety of their school experiences since the onset of their professional careers. Again, it must be pointed out that there was an increased level of confidence displayed when articulating this role, reinforcing the conviction that what they were saying was accurate and trustworthy.

Collective responsibility

There was a revealing development in the language used by some of the teachers when describing the role of the Catholic teacher. When asked during the first and second round of results to articulate this, participants spoke of their *own* role and referred to themselves when discussing how this should be fulfilled. During this round, however, as illustrated in Paul's (and also Julie's) account above, a significant number of the interviewees referred to themselves *and* their colleagues when discussing the Catholic teacher's role—emphasising a collective and organisational responsibility rather than one that is considered individualistic. The collective pronoun 'we' was adopted on a number of occasions by different teachers:

We've got to maintain that they understand about baptism, they understand the sacraments, they understand why they have the sacraments....[Ed]

I think we do encourage that and the idea that the Church is something that you can rely on....[Marie]

We're educators like every other teacher but I do think that we look at the whole person, that we try to develop people for life...and how we can use what is available to us through our faith in the way that we speak to those pupils...[Mary]

It is argued here that this development in a significant number of participants' use of language when describing their role further illustrates the impact of a successful socialisation process, where the school community and culture in which they find themselves placed can affect their beliefs and perspectives to the extent that they become aligned with those of others in their working environment. Interestingly, those who used 'we' when highlighting the Catholic teacher's role, and who spoke of their *collective* responsibilities, were those who had revealed that they had identified a strong sense of Catholic ethos and community established in their schools.

5.5.3 Professional Development Needs

With the exception of Denise, who believed that faith development was entirely the responsibility of the individual, every participant claimed that faith development should be considered a part of a Catholic teacher's *professional* development. For the vast majority, this was their view when they were first interviewed and their experiences in schools over the two-year duration of the research had, for many, strengthened the conviction. What follows is a presentation of why they considered this to be the case, and an exploration of their perceived needs in this particular area.

Why professional development?

When those participating were asked if faith development should be considered part of their *professional* development, the majority of answers were accompanied by strong justifications. Marie, for example, was quick to point out the Catholic teacher's obligation to the wider Catholic community and, in particular, to parents. In addition, she compared this area of development with other areas:

If you've made the decision to teach in a Catholic school, yes it should be because it's a large aspect of the school and people choose to send their children to Catholic schools. You know people make a conscious effort and by doing that, they need, we as teachers need to be sort of up-to-date in what we're doing. I do think it's important. Obviously we've got subject specific professional development and we've got all the sort of attainment and achievement and the ICT but it's [faith] a big aspect of the school so surely we should be trained in it rather than sitting round twiddling our thumbs. You couldn't just walk in from the street and teach it. It'd be like me going up and teaching a Tech class. I wouldn't be able to do it.

Sandra was quick to highlight the unique nature of the Catholic school and how the faith development of teachers would demonstrate the distinctive nature and purpose of such schools:

Without it, it is not a Catholic school. How can you teach you know, how can you be an example if you are not living your faith. Everybody while they're living their faith needs a wee bit of encouragement and uplift sometimes. You need a boost now and again... if you're gonna take on the role of a Catholic teacher, then you automatically should take on the role of being able to develop yourselves spiritually and I think if you don't do that, if it's not brought in, it's another reason for them to take Catholic schools away because [if faith development does not take place] what's the difference?

Mary echoed Helen's view of needing to be 're-charged';

It's the same with any subject then you would run out of energy for it.

Andrew, although in the nondenominational sector at this stage in his career, also believed that *faith* development should be considered *professional* development. He commented, *'I think you can't have one without the other.'*

Individuals with quite different faith backgrounds and differing levels of faith development agreed that this kind of activity should be considered professional development. Julie—someone who would have been categorised as 'faith confident' at the beginning of the research and someone who actively sought her own faith development opportunities outwith the school environment—spoke of how this kind of personal growth should definitely be considered part of her professional development profile. Brenda—arguably at the other end of the faith 'spectrum' and who had admitted that she was beginning to make more of an effort since returning to teach in the Catholic sector—revealed why—from her perspective—faith development should be considered part of a formal CPD portfolio:

I just think it helps you to be a better person and the happier you are, and the more content you are in your life, that would be portrayed in the way you teach and things and you know that'll come across.

The almost unanimous voice of the participants, stressing the need for faith development and for its recognition as professional development was striking. What was even more revealing, however, was their identification of their needs and how these appeared to have remained unchanged since the first interview took place, prior to their probationary year.

The CPD needs of the Catholic teacher.

What has become very apparent from this study is the fact that these teachers have had very little or no *formal*, in-school, faith development provision since working in schools—'formal' in the sense of courses or timetabled, organised activities with the purpose of engaging teachers with their faith and faith related issues. There were, over the two years in which they were interviewed, some instances of school staff retreats, communal worship for staff and participation in—or awareness of—specific faith-related courses but, in general, this was the experience of a very small minority. Conversely, however, there is strong

evidence to suggest that there were opportunities for faith development occurring via ‘informal’ interactions or activities within some schools—most often in those connected with strong symbolic faith leadership and overtly collaborative Catholic communities.

The participants, when highlighting why they considered faith development CPD to be an important inclusion in their careers, dwelt upon the nature of the CPD they considered would be most beneficial. Significantly, the majority of the participants made reference to the requirement to develop their *knowledge* of the Catholic faith, in order to build a firmer understanding of this tradition and keep up-to-date with developments in the Catholic Church. Patrick spoke of the need to develop knowledge in order to help teachers answer important questions about faith;

How often should a Catholic go to confession? Well, what does the Church say, you know well what is the teaching of the Church on things like knowledge and things like that...

Laura echoed this view, speaking of the need for development in terms of *knowledge* of faith in order to speak and teach authoritatively:

I think it's important that the teachers know what they're teaching and do know the answers and if you don't know the answer kind of say to the kids 'I really don't know that you know' but that's where staff need to get developed to deal with more kind of tricky situations because we aren't living in a society now where the children will just believe everything you say. They question you all the time.

Laura continued by highlighting some of the challenges facing Catholic teachers in Scotland today and how focusing *only* on curriculum-based CPD in RE (predominantly courses considering the *Alive O!* programme) is not the answer. She illustrated some of the difficulties she had faced:

I find it hard because ... you know where you're kind of trying to do Alive-O and they're contradicting what you're saying. You know "how can there be a God" you know if you know like today "how can there be a God if that wee lassie's still not been found in Portugal" you know and like I've never really come across that kind of questioning before from children and they're really kind of on the ball with the things they say and I think you know that a lot of the faith development you go on is like how to do Alive-O 1, how to do Alive-O 2, I think once you've done Alive-O once you can do it. You know it's a case of reading it through it. I think there should be more things on kind of you know teaching children who don't believe because more and more of them are saying "I don't believe in God" you know. What do you say to that? "Yes you do"? You know and they've got their own mind. If they don't believe then how can you change that around. And I think that that's the kind of thing that they should be focusing on...

Of those indicating a desire for faith development to be a part of their ongoing professional development, the area that most identified as being worthy of attention was the need to increase their knowledge of their faith to assist them in teaching children in a confident manner, and with authority.

What is interesting from the revelations from this round of interviews are the parallels with the first round, when the participants—then as student teachers—spoke of a concern for their lack of knowledge in their faith. This contrasted with their relative confidence in the pastoral and witness aspects of their role. It appears to be the case from the findings of this study that the witness of the Catholic teacher, and the ability to exercise a pastoral role in shaping the faith of the children they teach, has the possibility of being nurtured and developed in an informal way through the leadership and culture of the school, including the socialisation process. What is less susceptible to such development, however, is the knowledge base that is required authoritatively to teach children in the Catholic sector about the Catholic faith. It has become apparent that the majority of participants agree that additional support and CPD in this area would be advantageous.

5.5.4 Commentary

Astley (2004) refers to the work of Wittgenstein in his attempt to explore and explain developments in belief and faith. At one level he discusses individuals' learning about religion, either through intentional instruction or a socialisation process: 'such processes give us an understanding of the great concepts of faith, by teaching us how these notions are used' (p411). He refers to this as the 'grammar of faith'. Wittgenstein's (1963) understanding of 'grammar' in this context is that it 'tells us what kind of an object anything is' (p 373). In this context, 'theology' could be considered as the grammar of religion since it gives us the 'rules for religious discourse that determine what it makes sense to say to God and about God' (Astley 2004:411). It seems plausible to accept in this sense that a non-believer can engage in theology. Astley (2004), however, continues by discussing a different level in religious learning, a level that becomes 'belief' and involves a *response* and a reorientation of being. 'When this happens there is

a deeper, fuller religious understanding that is not just a matter of words alone... Attitudes and emotions such as love, fear, joy, hope, trust, kindness and humility are part of the meaning of the concepts of religion along with other capacities for response' (ibid:412).

It could be argued that in the context of this study, some participants experienced the emergence of a 'grammar of faith' as a result of positive Catholic leadership in their school and through a solid socialisation process. There is evidence to suggest that many of them *responded* to this, where observable behavioural commitments to faith were recorded. While the extent of this change or 'development' in faith is personal to each individual—and indeed the purpose of this study is *not* to measure the magnitude of such effects—it is a significant revelation that participants themselves have claimed and demonstrated a direct correlation between teaching in Catholic schools and the development of their faith.

At the beginning of this study, the identities of the main participants were explored and it became quickly manifest that 'faith' was certainly a feature in their lives and, in particular, an affiliation with or belonging to the Catholic tradition. Indeed, it has been claimed in this thesis that the Scottish context is significantly unique in terms of commitment of individuals to the Catholic faith. Many of those belonging to the Catholic community in Scotland recognise a struggle that their forefathers encountered when they first arrived in the country (a struggle that some argue is still alive (MacMillan, 2000)) and so the legacy of this has resulted in continued, firm displays of loyalty to this particular tradition. The majority's historical narratives were all quite similar in terms of being raised within practising Catholic families, albeit with varying degrees of commitment to traditionally central features of the Catholic faith. While 'faith' was revealed as being of importance to the participants in the study, it has also been acknowledged that the *depth* of this faith—and understanding of it—varied from individual to individual from the start of the research, and this variability has continued throughout. What the study has revealed, however—regardless of the degrees of commitment of individual subjects to the Catholic tradition—is the impact on faith of a deep socialisation process, particularly in schools where the

existing culture has the promotion of the Catholic faith as a key focus. It could be argued that a ‘grammar of faith’ has been ‘spoken’ to these teachers—and indeed pupils—via the symbolic leadership in such schools on a day-to-day basis—through a variety of observable words and actions, examples of which have been discussed and recorded in the previous section. Learning through faith appears to have occurred in the context of observation and experience, and the outcome of this ‘learning’ has been evident in the participants’ accounts of changes in behaviour. It could also be argued that an assimilation of learning has occurred for many—where learning becomes behaviour and then behaviour becomes habit. The personal frames of references of some of these individuals have altered and their ‘sources of spiritual capital’ (Grace 2002:237) have, arguably, been enhanced.

Those teachers who found themselves in non-denominational schools were very aware that there was a cultural difference between the two sectors and a lack of faith stimulus in their own environment. While most of the accounts of teaching in the nondenominational sector were very positive, a difference between the two sectors was often referred to, where a ‘grammar of faith’ was not evident and socialisation processes differed significantly from their peers in the Catholic sector, in terms of its impact on faith.

What has been exposed here is the powerful influence that Catholic school environments can have on the faith of teaching staff.

Teaching Authentically

After completing an initial teacher education programme, a probationary year and a full year working as a qualified Catholic teacher, the participants—through a wide variety of different experiences—agree that the role of the Catholic teacher is to be a witness to faith. This stance, of course, aligns very much with the institutional Church’s view, which is based on an understanding of Christ’s commission to his Apostles, as discussed in Chapter Two. The expectation of the Catholic teacher is to teach *authentically* and *authoritatively* and the present study has highlighted that these two aspects have presented challenges for many of those interviewed. The conversations with participants at the very start of the

research revealed many hopes and concerns about their roles as Catholic teachers. Interestingly, many of those who appeared secure in their faith were excited about the career on which they were about to embark, and were confident about their ability to be a witness to their faith in the Catholic school context. Those who were categorised as being more insecure in their faith also indicated that the pastoral dimension to their work, and the giving of witness to their faith was a role with which they too were comfortable. Indeed, references to their own Catholic education illustrated good and bad versions of this role from *their* teachers and the effects of these—both positive and negative—have been recorded as having had a significant impact in some of the subject's lives. Based on their experiences as qualified teachers, every participant, without exception, identified 'witness'—that is, the ability to teach '*authentically*'—as being central to the work of the Catholic teacher.

The very fact that the majority of these teachers recognise this as their main role, as a result of their own experiences, is significant. In the schools where the faith of teachers has been encouraged to develop through a particular school culture, the result in some participants has been arrival at a fuller understanding of what being an 'authentic Catholic teacher' actually means. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that, where the leadership in the school has promoted a positive Catholic ethos—one that is supported by all in the school—then this leadership can provide opportunities to nurture that *authentic* Catholic teacher role. It is being argued here that being an 'authentic' teacher ultimately requires a *response* to faith on behalf of the individual, and the evidence has revealed that an individual's response can be significantly influenced by the environment in which they are placed.

Teaching Authoritatively

The present research has also revealed that the second aspect of the dual role of the Catholic teacher—as highlighted by the Church—is not being afforded the same opportunities to be developed. To teach *authoritatively* about faith requires a solid knowledge base, something that the majority of the respondents in the study highlighted as their biggest concern in terms of ability to succeed in their role as a Catholic teacher. Indeed, at the beginning of this study, most

participants commented that they expected to receive development in knowledge of their faith throughout their career and they indicated a strong desire for this to occur. Their experiences in the classroom over a two-year period did not change the majority's opinion on this, but rather strengthened it. Development in this area—examples of which include, the teachings of the Church; the manner in which to answer questions; to deal with difficult questions or confidently to discuss faith issues—was requested by the vast majority of those teachers involved in the research. Many of those who were confident in giving witness to their faith did not always have the same confidence in teaching ‘authoritatively’, that is, being sure about the teachings of the Church and presenting (or defending) these in an appropriate manner. They highlighted a desire to have this kind of development as part of their continuing *professional* development—a concept that, with one exception, all considered to be worthy of support.

The lack of knowledge of theology or Church teachings, and limited confidence in the ability to present these appropriately to children, is indicative of the impact of the post-Vatican II era to which Robinson (2002) has alluded. The swing in the content of the Catholic education RE curriculum, from a catechetical rote-learning model to a focus on the personal faith journey of individuals—which has been criticised for not being rooted in theology—has, it is argued, resulted in a reduced awareness or understanding of Church teachings, Catholic prayers, the Church's liturgical calendar and other previously central features and traditions associated with the Catholic faith. (The vast majority of participants in the study are all products of a Catholic education incorporating such an RE curriculum.) While it is being argued here that a deeper awareness or understanding of these elements can be nurtured through a strong Catholic school culture which is committed to promoting some of these features on a day-to-day basis, a significant knowledge-gap exists that not only affects the delivery and content of what is being taught to children, but influences the manner in which a Catholic teacher works with children in the Catholic school and beyond.

The majority of participants in this study, through significant self-reflection, recognised their own shortcomings in this particular area and all considered development in it to be part of their *professional* development. With one or two

exceptions, teachers were not aware of any CPD opportunities to enhance their knowledge and understanding of their faith, or to develop their theological literacy. For the very small minority that had been made aware of any such CPD opportunities over the last two years, other priorities had been promoted in the school and so attendance at these events was rarely encouraged or even supported. What has been interesting is the pro-activity of some of the participants in developing their own knowledge of their faith, either through external parish-based meetings/events or through personal research. This feature indicates further that a desire for development of knowledge of faith issues does, in fact, exist among these participants in the Scottish context.

Comparative Dimension

The next stage in this thesis introduces a small, comparative dimension to the study by considering the experiences of a number of student, newly-qualified and fully-qualified Catholic teachers in New South Wales (NSW), Australia. The scale of this part of the research is not as extensive as that of the main study. However, the similar, robust methodology used to collect the data in NSW presented the researcher with an adequate volume of data from which to analyse, make comparisons and draw indicative conclusions. Its findings will now be presented.

Chapter 6

A Comparative Study

'Education is only truth in a state of transmission: and how can we pass on truth if it has never come into our hand?' (Chesterton, 1910, p200).

6.1 Introduction

The Catholic Church has high expectations of its educators in school with regard to the promotion and transmission of the Catholic faith, intent upon ensuring that schools engage with contemporary culture (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982). The religious and faith identity of the individual teacher in the Catholic school therefore comes sharply into focus. As dramatic as it may seem, the future of the Catholic Church is now widely recognised to be heavily reliant on these groups of teachers; their own identities and dispositions, it is claimed, will significantly contribute to the message and mission of the Church in contemporary society (ibid). The demands arising out of the widespread climate of expectation give rise to a series of important questions which have gone largely unexamined in the professional literature: do Catholic teachers today possess the skills, knowledge and understanding of their faith and of their role in order to carry out their job-description effectively? Does the new generation of Catholic teachers exhibit a commitment to the Catholic faith? Perhaps, surprisingly, there is a dearth of research on this subject, even though the Church has placed such responsibility on staff at the centre of the analysis. This research has already explored the views of a new generation of Catholic teachers in Scotland, on the question of faith and religious identity, faced with just this responsibility—along with their perceived role in the Catholic school environment—and has provided some much needed insight. The concern of this chapter is to explore and analyse the perspectives and experiences of Catholic student teachers and Catholic qualified teachers from a different country, providing the opportunity to compare and contrast the findings from the main study. It is considered that this data will add value to the theory that has already been generated.

The evidence for this phase of the research was drawn from the existing interviews with the participants of the research conducted in Scotland, but also on a smaller comparative study of 13 Catholic teachers in New South Wales (NSW), Australia.

Catholic schools in NSW are separated into two categories: they are either *systemic* schools or *independent congregational*. Systemic schools belong to the

diocese, and are answerable to the diocesan Catholic Education Office (CEO). Primary schools are, by and large, connected to a parish while the secondary schools are regional and are fed by a number of associated primaries. The majority of these schools were established by religious orders and would still claim to have strong connections to the founding charism of the orders. The non-systemic or independent ‘congregational’ schools are *owned* by the founding religious order (for example, the Marists, Jesuits, Sisters of Charity) and are not answerable to the Diocesan CEO, but rather to the provincial leadership of the order. The only exception is that these schools have to implement the Diocesan Religious Education programme. Around eighty percent of the funding for systemic schools comes from the federal and state Governments. Parents pay Diocesan (or Archdiocesan) tuition fees that are set by each school. Independent congregational schools get significantly less funding from the government and parents are expected to pay a much higher fee for the education of their children.

In discussing the interviews of those teaching in such schools, the focus will be on:

- the circumstances and nature of the motivation of the respondents to teach in Catholic schools;
- their understanding of what they are embarking upon (including their interpretation of the Church’s expectation of them);
- how they will envisage realising their responsibilities and,
- the support that they identify as being required to assist them in their role.

Primarily, attention will be paid to the different cultural backgrounds of respondents to see if there are any issues arising that are of significance. It has been necessary to revisit some of the findings from the main study to allow for sufficient contrast and comparison. Prior to the results being discussed, a brief reminder of the Church’s expectation/vision of the Catholic teacher will be presented.

The Catholic school in the modern world.

Despite much literature challenging their very existence and purpose, the continuing academic success of Catholic Education and Catholic schools worldwide is well documented and many enjoy a strong position in the competitive educational market. Grace observes that in the developed world Catholic schools have moved from a 'previously marginal to a currently centre-stage position of public and official endorsement' (2002, p4) Even though religious observance in terms of Church attendance is still in decline in the modern Western world, the fact remains that many 'Catholic' parents still exercise their choice and send their children to Catholic schools. Motives, of course, may vary. Parents may be convinced by the reported academic success of the schools; the belief that they provide a positive disciplined environment or because of their ecclesiastical identity and their role in forming and educating children in the Catholic faith. Indeed, it has been argued elsewhere that many children attending these schools do not come from a traditionally religious background at all, where prayer and worship are part of family life. Nevertheless, research reveals consistently (Grace, 2002) that parents still have the desire for their children to be instructed in the Catholic tradition, a tradition they once knew themselves, or indeed continue to know well or to which they still have some form of allegiance and accept once as part of their identity

The considerable popularity of the Catholic school sector among parents worldwide places high expectations on Catholic school leaders and educators within such schools. As already highlighted in Chapter Two of this thesis, the decline in religious vocations has had a significant impact on Catholic Education and the Church has had to affirm the conception of a *lay* vocation to teach. The volume of documentation that the Church has presented on this particular vocation illustrates this.

The Church has proposed a challenge to Catholic teachers by facing unflinchingly a world where many people's lives appear to be devoid of meaning and purpose where the 'struggle for the soul of the contemporary world is at its height' (Pope John Paul II, 1994, p112). The challenge is not only to attempt to give meaning and purpose to the lives of contemporary youth, but also to take a

stance with the Church in a much larger struggle (Grace, 2002). Haldane (1996) warns of ideologies that engage the Catholic school in an ecumenical and multicultural manner at the expense of losing their distinctively Catholic character and neglecting traditional Catholic theology. He reminds Catholic educators that ‘the primary function of Catholic schools is to transmit Catholic truths and Catholic values. Everything else, no matter how important, is secondary to this’ (p135).

It has been suggested that the high expectations for the role of Catholic educators can have a counter-productive effect on teacher recruitment (Grace, 2002). There are, however, large numbers of young adults still opting to teach in the Catholic school. The following results reveal some insights regarding the religious commitment and disposition of some of these very people as they live out the career of the Catholic teacher in New South Wales (NSW), Australia.

6.2 Results

The categories emerging for this part of the research will be considered in conjunction with the findings of the main study to allow for comparison. The theory that emerged from the main study has been used as the primary focus for the comparative stage and the findings from the interviews conducted in NSW have been reflected upon in light of these initial results.

Three main categories emerged as being worthy of discussion. These were, *faith identity*; *the Catholic teacher’s role* and *faith development needs*. Table 6.1 compares the findings from both groups of participants. These will now be discussed in detail.

	Scotland	NSW
Faith Identity	Parochial	Cosmopolitan
Regular Sunday Mass Attendance	Majority	Minority
Understanding of Role of Catholic Teacher	Give Witness	Teach Values
Confident in Ability to Carry Out Role	58%	99%
Faith Development Needs	Knowledge	Knowledge

Table 6.1: Overview of the majority of responses from the Comparative stage.

6.2.1 Faith Identity

Within this phase of the research, the intrinsic reasons for the majority interviewed in choosing to teach in a Catholic school were centrally linked to their identity and social histories: 92% of teachers in both NSW and Scotland identified their background as a major reason for their decision to teach in the Catholic sector.

In Scotland, as already highlighted, many of the teachers did not give any theological, political or educational reason for their choice. Phrases such as ‘obvious sector’ and ‘natural thing to do’ were used, indicating a loyalty and sense of belonging to their community—a subconscious cultural alignment. They appeared to be unreflective about their position and admitted simply being comfortable in their tradition. For others it was the inherent value of ‘continuing’ or ‘passing on’ the faith and being a part of the community and for a minority, a considered thought process clearly had taken place and they were able to confidently articulate their desire to be a part of the Catholic system on religious and theological grounds.

In NSW, the majority of responses demonstrated that a much more thorough thought process had occurred when considering whether or not to choose the Catholic sector in which to teach. Contrasting with the results from Scotland, historical attachment to the Catholic community was not given as a sole reason for entering this sector, but a more personal discernment appeared to have taken place:

Teaching in a Catholic school is going to be easier for me... I can bring out what I've learnt you know from my family and my tough experiences as a kid... I think the environment of the Catholic school is like a more loving and caring environment [Caroline]

I'm comfortable with it.. I guess the opportunity to share your faith with the students and hopefully help and nurture their spirituality and faith... it's an expression of your own faith to have that chance to contribute to the religious side of the school. Its' an expression of who I am [Neil]

Faith is an important part of my identity so I wanted to be able to make that part of my teaching and interaction with young people [Hugh]

I'm sort of attracted to it that way in that I feel like there's a foundation there that I can make a contribution to...[Mike]

It could be argued that the comments from many of the respondents in Scotland convey an 'unhealthy' position when considering teaching in the Catholic sector, since teachers appear blinkered in their choice, having failed to consider other options. Paradoxically it might equally be perceived as being a very strong position—teachers have not considered other options because they are so immersed in their tradition and feel strongly about remaining within it. As has been pointed out previously, the historical background of the Catholic community in Scotland has been influential in many of their biographies.

Faith Biographies

When discussing the religious backgrounds and 'faith biographies' of the respondents in Scotland, it emerged that *family* was most prominent in terms of influence on any religious development. It quickly became apparent that many of the teachers were brought up within the confines of a practising Catholic environment where religious observance and promotion of the faith's traditions were normal day-to-day events.

Alongside family being mentioned by most as having a paramount influence, *Catholic schooling* also had significant effects on shaping faith, although not all of these were positive. 92% commented on Catholic schooling having contributed to making an impact on their faith and, of these, 25% went as far as to say that this was even stronger than their family's influence.

Some of the experiences of the teachers located in NSW were similar in terms of faith backgrounds:

seeing my parents go through em problems or you know it could be death or sickness or whatever it is, em seeing my mother become more faithful and my father as well, it's amazing because you're living in a day and age where people turn away from it and turn away from religion and faith or they challenge it when bad things happen... my mum and dad just seem to grow stronger and I'm in awe of it [Louise]

My grandparents' house is covered with crucifixes and pictures of Padre Pio and all thatthat's then put onto us as well and em yeah my dad used to em do a lot of readings at the church so we'd do the offertory processions and we'd always get involved [Caroline]

What is different, however, is the uniformity of experience of their 'sources of spiritual capital' (Grace, 2002). A lower percentage of the teachers interviewed in NSW had the same intensity of faith transmission or faith promotion from their families compared with those from Scotland. Indeed, some of them did not consider their faith background to have been particularly strong.

well I mean I grew up in a Catholic familyso I guess I sort of had the basic formation through some family spirituality, not a lot.

My mum always made us go to Church until she no longer had that power and we didn't go anymore. We all went to sleep on Sundays so she goes. I think she still goes now sometimes. I don't know. I wake up late.

Interestingly, all participants in NSW indicated that the Catholic faith was a part of their identity. However, there were significant differences in how this was realised in their daily lives. One of the most striking examples of this was the issue of Church attendance.

With only a few exceptions, the teachers interviewed in Scotland revealed that they attend Mass—or at least try to—every week. Some admitted that this had not always been the case but now that they were in the teaching profession, they felt a deep sense of responsibility to ensure that they were practising and not

being ‘hypocritical’. At this juncture, it is again important to restate that Catholic teachers in Scotland are subject to a stringent approval process that comments on their belief and character and this may account for, or at least contribute to, the high percentage of Church attendance. However, the results are significant.

Among those interviewed in NSW, the statistics were significantly different—61% claimed that they attended Church on a weekly basis but, of those, many commented that they felt that they were in the minority amongst their peers. (Interestingly, the majority of those attending Mass on a regular basis were predominantly in the ‘student teacher’ category of this stage in the research and many of them admitted that their course—and its RE focus—had had an impact on their own faith and the development of this.) Mass attendance was not considered to be particularly high among recently qualified Catholic teachers and student teachers in NSW. However, this was not considered to be an obstacle, even among those who indicated that they were practising. For example, Elle commented,

There are a fair few that teach it [RE] but who are not practising...but as long as the children are being taught what they need to be taught then I think that's ok.

She does continue however

I personally believe that you need to have a background and you need to have a strong faith to get the best out of the children... if you are not practising your faith I think that you sort of stop at a point where that's it. They just get the content and then that's it.

Those who admitted that Mass attendance was not something that they observed regularly or at all, confidently articulated why this was the case and did not see it interfering with their ability to be competent Catholic teachers. Mandy, who was in the first year of her teaching career, explained

No I don't go to church. I still don't go to it now. I just, I don't find it you know uplifting to go. Like I'd rather, that's why I really like teaching because you get to think about those things and reflect on stuff even in the classroom which is what I think church is about anyway.

Vince, a fully qualified primary teacher, commented on the value in going to church on a Sunday, primarily since ‘you earn a lot of respect especially from children if you sit in that type of environment’ but he admitted being ‘lazy’ and not attending Mass on a regular basis. He said;

I mean I'm pretty bad, I don't usually go...but I also think that there's a lot more to teaching the Catholic values than just going to church.

Mags, who is another example of someone who admitted that she did not attend Mass regularly, nonetheless stressed that her faith was very much a part of her identity:

it's definitely a part of my life. Like if I was to get married or whatever, I would definitely wanna do it in the Catholic church. Yeah you know baptize my children and all those sorts of things so I would want it to continue, definitely.

Cath's situation was particularly revealing. At the time of interview she was completing an additional catechetical course (CCD—Confraternity of Christian Doctrine), enabling her to give religious instruction to Catholic children being taught in the non-Catholic state system. She commented that, as a result of this, she had found herself praying more and reading more and that her knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith was increasing. She did, however, comment that she did not attend Mass on a regular basis, although she did indicate that she was trying to improve.

I don't always get the chance to make it there so I'm not going to church every week, but I am getting better.

When comparing the responses of those interviewed in Scotland with those from NSW, certain trends begin to emerge. In Scotland, the teachers labelling themselves as 'Catholic' consider regular Mass attendance to be a key feature of their identity and attach an element of shame to non-observance. Some personal accounts from a very small minority of individuals illustrated this, where they conveyed significant levels of guilt for missing Mass or not attending on a regular basis at some point in their lives. This differed from those in NSW, where Sunday Mass attendance was not considered a pre-requisite for being a Catholic teacher. This was the view of the majority, including those who were themselves practising. There was evidence to suggest, in fact, that the *school* was the place where many of these teachers connected with and experienced 'Church', rather than through the regular attendance of Mass in the church building itself.

'Cosmopolitan' Faith?

Another theme to emerge from the comparative stage in the research was the different levels of knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith of those interviewed. For some, there were very strong indications of a thorough commitment to and immersion in the Catholic faith, including additional faith activities, sometimes involving being members of Catholic organisations. This level of engagement with their faith arguably contributed to a better understanding of it, and confidence in talking about it, and the faith position of the participants appeared to be very much aligned with the traditional teachings of the Church. For example, two participants from NSW had worked and lived with two different religious orders for a particular stage in their lives and both individuals spoke confidently and articulately about their faith positions, and about what they believed. In Scotland, while such extremes of faith involvement were not evident, some participants were identified as being very secure in their knowledge and understanding of their faith and, more often than not, these individuals were heavily involved in the life of their parish or, at least rhetorically, displayed a strong commitment to their faith. At this 'proactive' end of the faith spectrum there were many similarities with teachers in both countries. What is noteworthy, however, is what emerged when the remaining teachers' faith positions were considered.

For those interviewed in Scotland, while there were varying degrees of faith commitment and confidence in their knowledge and understanding of Church teachings, the majority of participants had much in common in terms of their experiences, beliefs and attitudes towards their faith. For example, as the results have already shown, they were all in agreement as to what their role as a Catholic teacher involved and they identified very similar areas for development in their faith. The findings from NSW were significantly different. As the commentary on Church attendance already indicates, there appeared to be greater variance in response from those in Australia regarding their commitment to faith and, on occasion, almost polemics in their opinions began to emerge. Of those interviewed, accounts from participants were recorded that clearly indicated that central beliefs or key features of the Catholic tradition were *not* accepted or promoted by them in schools. This differed significantly from the views of their

Scottish contemporaries mentioned above. Mandy's interview was a case in point. Her revealing discussion on her own beliefs and understanding of what she was teaching illustrates this variance in response:

I always try to move away from you know, 'Catholics are better so let's be Catholic and encourage Catholicism'. I suppose every religion models values and just put a different name to it in the end. I have a particular problem with the resurrection but in the end I don't think it's probably, it's probably very open cause some people wouldn't agree with me but I don't think that's the important part anyway. I don't know if that makes sense. To me the most important part about Christ is, was the ministry not the death and resurrection. It seems a bit too fanatical.

This rejection of one of the key features of the Catholic tradition is of particular interest when we consider Mandy's identity, as described by herself:

I'm a Catholic and I've grown up a Catholic and I'm familiar with it and I can relate back to the kids so it's better for me and it's better for them.

Her own description of her faith and adherence to this is not aligned with a traditional response of a Catholic teacher, as expected by the Church. In her open and honest interview, there is additional evidence to suggest that there exists quite a significant difference from the views, practices and beliefs of other 'Catholic' teachers, and particularly of those interviewed across the globe. At one point she refers to one of the sacraments that Catholic children receive at school—the Sacrament of Reconciliation—but does not know the name given to this; 'you know the First Confession, what's it called?' When talking about sacred space or 'altars' in the classrooms at school she describes them as being 'really cute' and refers to children blessing themselves as 'doing the cross and stuff.' When discussing the school's prayer life she admitted why she 'always forgets' to pray with the children in her class:

I forget to do it only cause I don't pray myself. But they do say a prayer in the homeroom every morning and I'm pretty sure a lot of teachers do prayers at the end of the day. To me it seems a little bit too much but we should be following some protocol.

While this is an example of a Catholic teacher whose faith position appears to be somewhat different to that which the Church advocates as being normative for this role, there are other examples of divergence of opinion from Church teaching among those working in the Catholic sector. A number of participants in NSW spoke of how many of their Catholic peers—responsible for teaching in the

Catholic school—would have little or no interest in the Catholic faith and a corresponding level of knowledge and understanding of it. Cath commented;

...some of my friends who are teaching [in Catholic schools] and have permanent positions, they ring me up and they say, 'oh what can I do for this lesson' because they're just not, you know into anything to do with the Church. They just happen to be yeah, they just happen to be teaching it a Catholic school and you know if it's not in their curriculum then they don't know what to do.

She gave a short anecdote in order to exemplify a point about the importance of being a witness to faith, through both words and actions:

Oh I just, I'll give you a perfect example of this. Okay em there's a girl in our University, who is well she's still there, she's in her final year now training to become a teacher in a Catholic school. Has done her practice in a Catholic school but she, she's also like a cheerleader for one of the football teams and she's always entering these model competitions. She's had nude photos you know professional ones done you know etc but then entered a competition in a men's magazine here called FHM yeah right okay. It was a girl next-door competition so there's pictures like obviously some girls yeah whatever they were in their skimpy little bikinis etc and then there were girls who were just like wearing top, jeans whatever. She entered a picture with her little crop top wearing a G-string and posing in it and I just thought like and then she sent an email round everyone saying vote for me and I just thought oh my goodness like [Laughs] people I'm sure that young children's parents look at those magazines and they're going to see her and go that person's teaching my daughter or my son. You know oh, I was so disgusted. It's so important and I think there's two ways to look at it. There's your inner self and what you think is important and I think that if I'm going to be teaching children about the way they should be living and the things they should be doing, then I should be doing the same, and I shouldn't be teaching them something that I'm not doing.

Hugh, a fully qualified primary school teacher and someone who had verbally demonstrated a strong commitment to his Catholic faith, had an opinion about many of his peers and of their levels of commitment to, and understanding of, their religion. He explained

I might be a little bit arrogant here, but it's something that I don't think us teachers take an active interest in or actively pursue. Em if you choose to teach in a Catholic school, I think you have a responsibility to know what you believe and to be able to articulate and to develop it because faith isn't static, it's, people aren't static either, as we grow and change then so should our faith and our understanding. My arrogant opinion is that a lot of teachers and students as well based on my experience at University teacher training, is that most of the people I come across in Catholic schools, have no more than say a High School understanding of their faith and perhaps because they haven't chosen to pursue it.

What is revealing here—even from the subjective opinions and anecdotes of those interviewed in NSW—is the difference in responses from both sets of participants. In NSW there appeared to be a greater degree of variance amongst participants in terms of their response to faith and the commitment they appear to

give to it. There almost appears to be the emergence of a polemic, where individuals are either, heavily involved in and committed to their faith, or where traditional features of the Church are not adhered to or considered important, even though proponents of this lifestyle still consider themselves to be ‘Catholic’. When compared with the results of the main study, the participants in Scotland appear to be on what could be referred to as a ‘middle-ground’. Here—in comparison to the results from NSW—the variance amongst them in terms of their own admitted faith commitment is much less marked. In fact, there appear to be many common features. One example can be found in the participants’ understanding of their role.

6.2.2 The Catholic Teacher’s Role

All of the respondents were confident and clear when detailing what they believed to be their role as a Catholic teacher. However, there was a significant difference between the two locations regarding what that role entailed. The majority of the responses from those interviewed in Scotland indicated an awareness of the Church’s expectation of them; most notably, they talked about being a witness to the faith, passing on the faith, helping children in their faith journeys and spreading the Gospel message—all familiar language of the Church. However, only 58% of the teachers admitted feeling confident in carrying out this responsibility and among even these teachers an awareness of the enormity of the task was visible.

You’re a Catholic teacher. It’s not a thirty-five hour week you’re a Catholic teacher, it’s non-stop like in everything you do [Joseph]

It’s a bit scary but I feel more excited about doing it because it is a challenge...[Siobhan]

Yeah but...I’m still learning...it’s a little bit frightening that these kids are relying on you to learn their faith [Francesca]

Those interviewed in NSW were equally articulate in discussing their roles as Catholic teachers, but for 76% of them this role differed significantly from their colleagues on the other side of the globe. Where those in Scotland spoke of transmitting faith and knowledge, and understanding of the teachings of the Church, the majority of those interviewed in NSW viewed their role as being much more concerned with promoting humanistic values and morality:

Well my main responsibility would be just to teach values to everything we come across you know like you always bring up the Christian values of caring and loving and sharing [Rachel]

Just to be honest and to be truthful and to be nice and you know to get along with the other children and to accept other people for who they are [Mags]

I suppose to model values like you know charity, being caring, compassionate, all those types of things in the classroom to the students even in things like reprimanding them for you know things that they're doing that's wrong [Mandy]

..values and social justice and stuff like that.. [Vince]

With one exception, all of those interviewed in NSW felt confident in carrying out what they perceived their role to be.

'Values' versus 'Witness'

In terms of the institutional Church's position, the responses of those interviewed in Scotland would be considered to be broadly in line with its expectations. Paradoxically, the responses of those in New South Wales could be presented as appropriate attributes of *any* classroom teacher in *any* school. Again, the historical narratives of both the participants and the countries in which they find themselves come sharply into focus. The legal requirement for Catholic teachers in Scotland to gain their Catholic Teachers' Certificate arguably raises the profile of the role of the Catholic teacher, and the requirement to engage in a programme of Catholic Teacher Formation during the completion of an ITE course further adds to this. This is of course coupled with evidence of strong allegiances to the Catholic tradition as a part of the living legacy of the emergence and continuation of the Catholic community in Scotland and its struggle for recognition. It differs significantly from the situation in NSW, where teachers do not have to be approved by the Church and, therefore, it would be reasonable to conclude that its expectation of them will not be as prominent as it is for those based in Scotland.

6.2.3 Faith Development Needs

The main part of the study highlighted two important aspects regarding the continuing faith development of Catholic teachers in Scotland. The first was that the school in which teachers were placed, and the socialisation process upon which they embarked, had the potential to exercise a significant influence on the

individual's faith, and stimulate development. The second was the evident need for the development of teachers' knowledge of their religion, of Church teachings and of other related documentation. The analysis of the data from this comparative stage in the research revealed some interesting similarities, but significant differences also.

Of those based in NSW and interviewed in their last year as student teachers, all expected and indeed desired support in the area of faith development. Neil demonstrated the high expectations that the students had of their schools with regard to this area:

...being in that environment is only going to help my faith grow and develop because I'm going to become more fluent in the you know the teachings of the Catholic faith

From the analysis of the interview data from those in NSW, it became apparent that the opportunities for faith development within the schools in which the teachers were placed were quite different to those experienced in Scotland. While there were many features that were similar, in terms of whole school worship and prayer, participants revealed some radically different faith-related practices that were worth exploring. Two key events that were common in the schools of the majority of the teachers interviewed in Australia were, 1) the practice of having staff prayer at the start of a meeting once a week (usually led by a different member of staff each week) and 2) an annual 'Spirituality Day' where the whole teaching staff in the school would come together on a retreat-like situation. Both activities were mentioned and had been experienced by the majority of those interviewed, including those in their final year of study during their school experience placements or 'casual teaching' periods, where student teachers were employed by schools on a supply teaching basis. The reaction to these activities from *some* participants was very positive:

Monday we have a staff briefing and that starts with a prayer and one staff member each week fills out a prayer for everyone to read and it's, like it's normally very poetic and thoughtful...Yeah like they have stuff like that. Em yeah they're always pretty interesting. Some of the people have some really interesting ideas of how to pray...but everyone's coming out with these extravagant prayers...its just for about a minute or two. It's at the beginning every time, that again is a constant reminder that you know it's a Catholic school. I think it's good because em some of them are really quite thoughtful. They're not like em they're not being self involved. A lot of it's you know to pray for this, pray for that person, em we'd like to help someone this week we just want to say a little prayer for them. They always try to look outside and it just gets the staff in

and settled cause everyone's quiet and we're all thinking and then the you know in the mode to talk about other things after that [Mandy]

What is interesting, however, is that those who were categorised as being committed to promoting the traditional practices and teachings of the Church were *not* as impressed with such occasions. For example, Cath shared her experience of such prayer sessions;

I think some teachers just sort of throw it together at the last minute and not really care about it and you do see the odd teacher that has really put a lot of effort into finding something that's related to what's going on at the moment or what's going on in school and em and come up with a really good em prayer session yeah. It's hard like sometimes I think oh what a waste of time like that was stupid. Some teachers get up there and say the Hail Mary for you know whatever and I think.

She continued by giving her opinion of staff Spirituality Days:

...a lot of the time the teachers are forced to go on that day you know like their one day every year or something and em and you know when they don't want to be there it makes it hard for the people who do want to be there and do want to further develop. I just think if they had the opportunity to be asked do you want to or you don't want to and what would you prefer to do then like yeah everything would be more beneficial and the one-day could be the best thing you know but if you're with people who want to know and want to learn...

Steve also indicated that he was not convinced by the supposed impact on faith of the *Spirituality Days* since, according to him, there was no substance to them and no real involvement of faith. He considered that schools took part simply to 'tick a box';

A Spirituality Day doesn't really go very far. It talks about you know engaging in teaching and strategies and all that sort of stuff but em I feel like I have to bring my faith along so I'm making choices in my day and also beyond the day that forms me in who I am, so I would say not much [impact on faith]...I know where it is coming from but listening to others, often it's like, 'Oh another one of these days' but it's meaningless.

What is revealing is that those who displayed *looser* attachments to the Catholic Church appeared to enjoy these days much more and valued their impact.

A significant difference between the schools in NSW from those in Scotland is the presence of a *Religious Education Coordinator* (REC) in the schools. The remit of this person is concerned with the RE curriculum, but, in addition, the promotion of a religious ethos in the school. Many of the participants referred to the REC in their environment and indeed spoke of him/her being a source of

support. What began to become apparent, however, was that the REC took responsibility for the development of the spiritual life of the school sometimes at the *expense* of others' involvement. Vince exemplified this by highlighting how the work of the REC was not necessarily integrating with his own, and how he seemed to lack an understanding of the purpose of some additional faith related activities:

I think the Religious Education Coordinator is pretty involved ...they sort of organise the days where we have pupil-free days and have a religious day so they organise stuff like that. Em I don't know how many people go on them.

The spiritual life of the school appeared to be more compartmentalised in a way that it was not in the majority of the Catholic schools in Scotland. Some teachers did not always display knowledge of what was happening in terms of the spiritual life of the school and, when they did, some appeared to be disengaged or demonstrated a limited degree of interest. For example, most of the schools were founded by a particular religious order and, indeed members of the religious order were still teaching or having an active associative role in the school. Nevertheless, some of the participants in the interview did not know the name of the founder of the religious order whose feast day they celebrate together each year as a school, indicating a lack of understanding of the charism of the school and its declared ethos:

I can't remember who the founder is... this used to be two schools. It used to be a boys and a girls school then they joined up in about eighty-three so there are two orders. I'm not quite sure of their names [Mandy].

While this lack of knowledge or understanding was not always the case—and indeed there were a number of teachers who demonstrated an active involvement in the liturgical and spiritual life of the schools—the number of participants indicating a *lack* of awareness of, or indeed interest in, the faith or spiritual nature of the school was more significant than it was of those teaching in Scotland.

Symbolic Leadership

One of the largest similarities in terms of the experiences of both sets of participants was the impact that the leadership in schools could potentially have on the faith of individuals. Although there was varied experience of an explicit

promotion of faith or religion in the different schools, the impact of this factor on faith where it did exist—and where the school Principal or those in promoted posts were clearly committed to this—was recorded. Mags, a primary school teacher in a suburb of Sydney, spoke of the faith commitment of her school Principal and of how this contributed to the overall school culture:

Oh there are icons everywhere. Em and I think I mean maybe it's because I know that it's a Catholic school but the feel of the school. Em you know everyone has just got that I don't wanna, it's gonna sound funny, it's not that they're peaceful but it's a very calming like the way that... the children's responses from a religion lesson or whatever it is that's displayed you know in the like in the corridors and in the office, there are things there you know, there's all prayer spaces everywhere and things like that that will show you that yes it definitely is a Catholic school.

She continues by sharing the practices of the senior management in the school:

...they do give you opportunities to have like spirituality days and time where you take time out and you do reflect upon your faith and where you're at em you know with your faith. And that is helpful because sometimes you do get lost and caught up in all the paperwork and everything else that goes on that you sometimes forget where you are... they encourage you to be involved within the parish and within the community and if there is any em we have a grade Mass for the kids so your grades like the 3 year 2 classes so we had a grade Mass last term and all of the teachers em are asked to come and they're encouraged to stay back and get involved with the parents and there was a barbecue and a jumping castle. Yeah I think it's really more so because it is encouraged and not pushed and expected, you know you're not told you must go, because if the encouragement, it's a lot nicer. That's my personal opinion. I think that yes because you're not pushed, and there is an option for you and it's a warm option. It's an encouraging and a nice sort of option. It's not one of those options where you kind of think it's an option but you kind of have to do it anyway you know.

Hugh was very aware of the faith commitment of his Principal:

He is very active and takes a very hands-on role in spirituality.

When asked to give examples of this he shared;

...a really obvious one is the school's motto 'Live Jesus' Way' which he refers to daily. It's part of our prayer life as a refrain that at the end of each prayer, each morning which children pray their refrain is 'Let us live Jesus' way' and everyone answers 'Forever' so it's explicitly mentioned as I said when there's disputes we refer to it. Are we living Jesus way?

Cath explained that she had spent time teaching in a number of Catholic schools as a 'casual' teacher and believed that she had experienced a variety of different leadership styles. In her opinion, she was aware of a strong culture of faith in only one of these:

...at one of the schools that I've done quite a bit of casual work at, they always have em their Novena prayers every day for people who are sick in the parish and especially you know if it's been em the partner of a teacher or someone that's been you know important in the school you know they do that after lunch they have their Novena every day and em I think really to be honest that's the only school out of the I work at seven different schools and I think really that's the only school that places an importance on praying or as a community ... the Principal's only been there, this is her third year now, em so in the first year I was on my prac [school experience placement] there and em she was trying to make a lot of changes in the school cause the school had become very lax in a lot of things and em one of them was with faith formation and em I think that's why she's introduced the Novenas for em (.) for the sick people and becoming a bit more strict on religion in the classroom... I know that she went through the teachers and last year to find out which ones didn't have their RE certificate and started sending them off to get it...

While the *quantity* of accounts of symbolic faith leadership was not particularly high, the effect that this had on those who had experienced it was as striking as it was for those in Scotland. Drew explained how the leadership in his school had influenced him:

I find them quite inspiring actually...probably more by their behaviour and their actions and their attitude towards the children...some teachers you meet have eh em they go into a school with the attitude that the kids are all little horrors, that they're inherently evil you know. Other teachers believe that children are inherently good and that comes through quite strongly and they have definitely have that. Even through the difficult children, they are very patient and supportive with them. Some of their problems I've seen in terms of the staff issues, staff who have got problems with the children, with students or issues at home, they've been very supportive, very patient and yeah... going to this school it's definitely shown me that's there are schools out there where you know faith issues are more important and em and that so that's been good. It's been a positive thing. And also em in some [Catholic] schools, the subject of Religion is very much downgraded and degraded. It's seen as 'why do you want to study Religion when you can do Science and Math and English and the HSC?' and all of this em and in these good schools, the subject itself is given more em, given more value, more worth.

At the start of this section we read of Neil's expectation regarding the impact that a Catholic school environment will have on his faith, and his knowledge and understanding of Church teachings. While this may be unrealistic, there is still strong evidence to suggest—from both sets of interviewees—that the environment in which Catholic teachers are placed, including its leadership style, can have a significant influence on the attitudes and behaviour of individuals.

Knowledge

The final point that emerged from the comparison of interview data of the participants in both NSW and Scotland, was a strong desire for development in *knowledge* of their faith. In terms of the responses in Scotland, this has already been recorded and while the desire for this was not as widespread from the

accounts of those responding in NSW, it was as intense. Interestingly, many of the requests for such development came from those who displayed allegiances to the traditional teachings and practices of the Church, and they were requesting it for both themselves but even more so, their peers.

6.3 Commentary

Some globalists argue that the world is being irreversibly transformed for the better: rapid growth and reduction of poverty in traditionally poor countries; the advancement in technological communication along with the ability to access larger and growing markets extending beyond national borders, are only a few examples cited as the powerful and beneficial effects of globalization. Others dispute the seemingly positive effects of the phenomenon of globalization, viewing this as a loss of control over individual lives, the environment, economics, government, nation states, etc, ultimately resulting in powerlessness (Castells, 2003, p.72).

Regardless of one's position in the debate, it cannot be disputed that there is an increased perception of our globe as a smaller place; where political, social or economic events elsewhere in the world have consequences for our own sense of being, for our everyday living. Templeton (1999) refers to the world being 'bound up in an inextricable connectedness in which every culture is liable to encounter every other' (p.79). For many, this globalized world is one devoid of certainty, of knowing what lies ahead. People find themselves in an environment where the life they once led is being challenged, contested and even transformed. As Kinnvall observes, 'globalization challenges simple definitions of who we are and where we come from' (2004, p742) and this can result in individuals missing the protective cocoon of associative and kindred ties that sheltered them in the past (Giddens, 1990). One response to such insecurity is to try and reduce existential anxiety by gravitating towards a collective identity or even reaffirming one that has been threatened, sometimes resulting in an unhealthy regression or upsurge in re-tribalization (Barber, 1992, p53), recently evident in the rise of fundamentalism and of global terror networks. Indeed, the events of September 11th are illustrative of certain trends surrounding issues of identity and

belonging and will no doubt remain to be a powerful touchstone when continuing to discuss the effects of globalization.

The desire to anchor one's identity, to seek attachment and belonging in a world full of continuous change and short term commitments is, then—unsurprisingly—a live issue. Nationalism is one example of identity that has such appeal for anchorage since it can provide powerful historical narratives, symbolism and beliefs that give people a sense of security and stability. Religion is another.

The return of religion in a secularized and globalized world?

It is recognised that secularization was a powerful force in the developed world during the 20th century, where religion gradually ceased to have the same social significance it once enjoyed. Difficulties in keeping alive and renewing religious adherence for different traditions in a desecralised and secular world have been well documented for decades. It is argued in some quarters, however, that an effect of globalization has been the *upsurge* in religious allegiance and that the secularization paradigm is now in doubt. Bogomilova argues that, 'the revival of local forms of identity and sociality (ethnic, religious, cultural communities) or regional and trans-national alliances, have served to animate religious feelings and have redefined the cultural borderlines of religion' (2003, p2).

Recent research conducted in the UK suggests that religious faith is still of importance to many and that Christianity remains a spiritual driving force for over half the population (Ashworth, 2007). While acknowledging Bruce's (2002) concern that such polls are not always reliable, viewing the results as simply indicative is still illuminating. Recognizing that Church attendance is still low, a representative poll revealed that 53% of the population claim to be Christian, with other faiths accounting for 6%—indicating that three out of five people in the population are affiliated with faith. One of the most significant revelations however was that—despite being a multi-cultural city with 20% of people of other faiths—London has a very high percentage of regular church-goers (22%), second only to Northern Ireland (45%). While recognizing that other geographical locations may alter these figures, the results are indicative of a world where religious identity is still strong. These statistics therefore suggest

that, despite a continued decline in Church attendance, many people still display a sense of belonging or at least an allegiance to faith.

Historically for the Roman Catholic Church, strong elements of shame were often attached to lack of observance and those choosing not to practise often considered this as severing ties with the Church and their faith. In our much more global and cosmopolitan society, there is evidence to suggest that these sources of shame have on the whole been normalized and that people 'of faith' are less fixated on religious observance and worship, but more concerned with values and dispositions. Martin (2005) remarks that, 'loyal identification does not entail agreement with ecclesiastical pronouncements and lay Christians make their decisions in terms of what makes moral sense in the life-world' (p156). It is argued that it is important for the Church to recognize that faith adherence has taken on quite different formats and respond appropriately to this, if it desires to make an impact on society in the manner in which historically it did.

In accepting that the Catholic Church is required to engage in a different manner with society and to recognize that faith and religious identity still have meaning for many, albeit in new forms, there exists a corresponding concern regarding the strength and validity of the message given when reaching out to a new generation of Catholics, a concern which has been referred to as, 'the temptations of commonality' (McLaughlin, 1999, p77). In this terrain Catholic leaders encourage vigilance since, as a result of engaging with contemporary culture, there is often the 'temptation to prevent attention being given to the specifically religious concepts and perspectives which a properly balanced perspective on the Catholic tradition of faith and life require' (ibid., p85). Recent communication from Poland's Bishop Karpinski to Polish emigrants illustrates this concern. We find him resorting to the promotion of 'cultural retreatism' (Grace, 2007, p7) by urging Poles who have migrated to other countries to attend Polish Churches and remain part of Polish communities for fear that integration, even into the wider Catholic community, may result in the dilution of faith, the corruption of orthodoxy or even the loss of Catholic identity ("Are we devout enough for the faithful Polish?" 2007). McLaughlin uses the recollections of Geoffrey Robinson (Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Sydney) to further illustrate the point.

Robinson acknowledges that traditional views of faith and religion were not always healthy but he does, however, question if the modern image of God often promoted among some of the 'faithful' has gone to the opposite extreme. 'This new God is full of love, tenderness, compassion, kindness, and warm feelings. This God permanently consoles, never challenges, doesn't forgive because there is no such thing as sin and thus nothing to forgive, and often doesn't even encourage, for encouragement could imply challenge' (Robinson, 1997, p9). The reactive, all embracing, cosmopolitan, 'big hug' God is considered by some to be limited, undemanding and unsatisfying and the effects of promoting such a diluted position with regard to an understanding of faith can be harmful. A balanced grasp of both faith and life is called for to avoid superficiality and ambiguity. Recognizing that the pulpit is no longer by itself an effective platform for such communication to modern society, the Church has looked to its schools to respond appropriately to the challenge. This realignment undoubtedly raises questions about the dispositions of those working in such schools. For example, do new generations of Catholic teachers, predominantly made up of those who have been brought up in this changing and globalized world, exhibit a level of commitment and knowledge and understanding that reflects a 'diluted' faith or that promotes 'commonality' with other educational establishments?

The findings from the comparative stage in *this* particular research have attempted to start addressing this question. The comparative stage in the research suggests that there are many similarities among Catholic educators from different cultural backgrounds. The interviews convey an alert awareness on the part of student and newly qualified teachers' perception of what it means to them to be teaching in the Catholic school. Many respondents displayed a thoughtful understanding of their own position and of the strengths and concerns that they had with regard to being effective Catholic educators.

One theme that emerged was the difference in the faith backgrounds and religious identity of the participants and much of this related to their geographical location. For the majority of those teaching in Scotland, a firm attachment to the Catholic community, an unequivocal belief that Catholic education is of value and worth, coupled with the majority's positive experience

of Church, school and home are all indicative of the impact of religion in their formative years. When detailing their role in the Catholic school the teachers in Scotland were very aware of the expectations of the Church and their responses exemplified this. The commitment to the Catholic tradition that is espoused here is acute, which in itself is revealing—if perhaps unsurprising when we appreciate the context in which the majority of the respondents find themselves. The findings here, then, point to the emergence of a ‘particularist’ or even ‘parochial’ Catholic identity, where people have an attachment to faith that is mainly concerned with their own local environment and set of experiences.

Those interviewed in NSW also exhibited firm loyalties to the Catholic Church and considered faith to be central to their identity. However, a significant percentage displayed looser attachments to what may be claimed as ‘essential’ features of the Catholic tradition. The results of those interviewed in New South Wales were indicative of a much more ‘cosmopolitan’ approach to faith and religious identity, where teachers are less fixated on the fundamental characteristics often associated with the Catholic faith and more interested in the promotion of broad Christian values and dispositions. Their understanding of their role in the Catholic school echoed this, where the emphasis was on the promotion of values and morality, rather than on the transmission of faith or the development of knowledge and understanding of Church teachings. Some would argue that this ‘cosmopolitan’ religious identity is loosening degrees of attachment, and although Church attendance is not a prerequisite for an adequate knowledge and understanding of one’s faith, it would be reasonable to assume that those regularly involved in the Catholic Church would have a deeper understanding of what it is to be Catholic and be better acquainted with Church developments and teachings. Nevertheless, the evidence from the interviews suggests that faith and religious identity are still very strong. Indeed many of those teaching in NSW *were* less concerned with religious observance than their colleagues in Scotland, but they did exhibit a deep level of discernment when considering their career path and were very articulate in explaining why they decided that the Catholic sector was where they wanted to be.

These findings are echoed in a relatively new study in its initial stages carried out in another part of Australia by Leuven's Katholieke Universiteit. There is evidence to support the view that the kind of Catholicism that many people adhere to in modern society is what could be referred to as a 'pick and mix' Catholicism. This finding challenges the established secularization hypothesis as it is commonly applied to education—that individuals are non-religious and only appear to be so in order to get jobs in school. Rather, it points to highly individualized ways of considering faith, consistent with the consumer society in which individuals live. Insincere hypocrisy is not what is being suggested here but rather the composition of a tailored packaging of faith that is compatible with individualistic lifestyles or consumer citizenship.

Two divergent accounts of religious identity become apparent here and this may have implications for the Church. It is recognised that the Catholic school is the new pulpit for the Church; a place where the Gospel message and Church teachings can be lived and learned and where Catholic educators are expected to be evangelisers and catechists. However, where the clergy have traditionally been well versed in the teachings of the Church and have had strong religious formation prior to taking their place in the pulpit and proclaiming the message of the Church, lay Catholic teachers have not experienced parallel support, even though the expectation of them now to deliver in this area is as strong.

The effects of globalization and the suggestion that there is an upsurge in religious identity in modern society present the Catholic Church with an opportunity to engage positively with the contemporary world in an attempt to claim at least part of its 'soul'. Arguably, however, this requires a cooperative approach from those who are in influential positions and are responsible for attempting to achieve this.

The religious identity of individuals can contribute significantly to the message being promoted in influential establishments such as the school. The comparative findings presented in this chapter are indicative of significant inconsistencies among Catholic educators regarding their views of their role, their faith commitments and religious identity. If the Catholic Church desires to engage

with the contemporary world in an effective manner—while retaining a distinctive identity that promotes faith transmission and specific Catholic beliefs—then it may require to be much more explicit in detailing this to its Catholic educators and committed to providing opportunities for the development of their faith.

Chapter 7
POINTING TO THE FUTURE

'Looking inward is not egocentric. It is an essential act of professional responsibility, done in the cause of considering children's educational needs and rights.' (Dadds, 1997:31)

7.1 Introduction

The final stage in this study was to consider the perspectives on the faith formation of Catholic teachers of two senior Catholic Church representatives in Scotland. These individuals are concerned with the day-to-day running of Catholic Education in Scotland. As highlighted in Chapter Three, the first of these individuals was the chairman of the Catholic Education Commission (CEC), the body whose function is to advise and assist Scotland's Conference of Catholic Bishops on all educational matters and to promote development in this particular field. The chairman of the CEC also happens to be the bishop of one of Scotland's largest Catholic dioceses and for the purpose of this chapter he will be referred to as 'the Bishop'. The operational agency of the CEC is the Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES), which, among other things, works to offer support and guidance to schools and Catholic teachers in Scotland and develop and implement plans for the advancement of Catholic education. The director of SCES agreed to be interviewed for this particular research and again, for the purpose of this study, will be referred to as 'the Director'.

These individuals were invited to participate because it was deemed important to understand their views on a number of key areas—including the role of the Catholic teacher; their view of who *they* consider to be responsible for the development of the faith of Catholic teachers; and their perspectives on the arrangements that are in place to support this. The questions focused on these particular areas and the answers they generated were considered in light of the theory that had emerged from the main study. Both the Bishop and the Director were subjected to the same data collection technique used in the previous research stages, and the transcribed interviews were coded and analysed in exactly the same way.

7.2 Results

A variety of categories emerged under the core category for this stage, which was entitled, *Pointing to the Future*. These were, *Challenges*, *Awakenings*, *Leadership* and *Political Implications*. A presentation of these categories and their related concepts can be viewed in *figure 7.1*. Each will now be considered in turn.

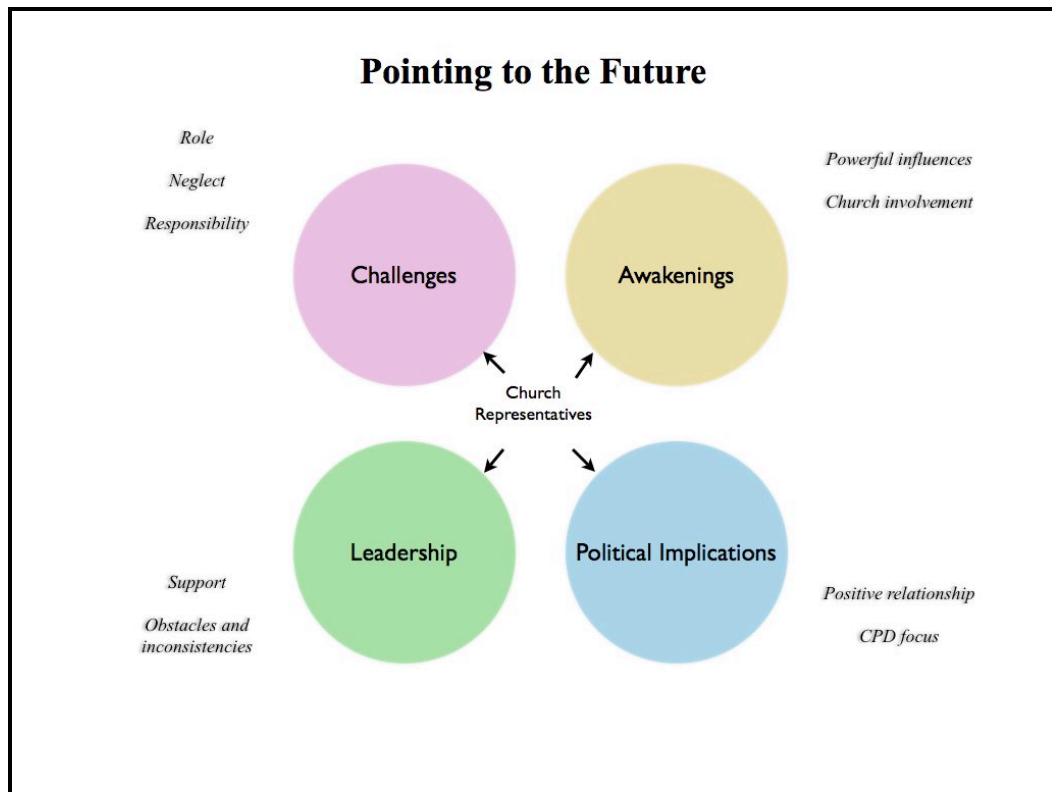


Figure 7.1: Pointing to the Future: Key Categories and their Concepts

7.2.1 Challenges.

Both the Bishop and the Director were in agreement that the role of the Catholic teacher in Scotland presents increasing challenges to individuals wishing to embark on a career in the profession. Echoing the sentiments of the participants tracked over a three-year period for the main part of the study, they recognised that societal developments and changes over the last few decades—including the fact that Scotland has become increasingly secularised—have placed additional demands on the Catholic teacher whose own set of realities have also been affected by these developments.

Role

The Bishop, representing the CEC, illustrated the type of background that many newly qualified teachers should expect of the children in their classes, and this was based on some informal research of his own:

I've been over-viewing a survey of primary-one teachers for some many years. I moved First Communion into primary four cause the teachers need another year to get them [children] ready. They were coming to school and ninety per cent even from good parishes, didn't know a prayer. Didn't know a single prayer at five years of age.

Nothing. Had rarely ever been in church and so it is a very different kind of world. So it's a changing role for the Catholic teacher. Cause they have got to put their faith on the line, it's a very personal kind of witness.

Taking this into consideration, he described the role of the teacher to be

...sadly increasingly and evangelist in today's world where it used to be someone who passed on the message of faith but now they're introducing it.

This directly relates to the experience of the majority of teachers interviewed for this study. Those teachers also recognised the associated challenges. The Bishop illustrated his appreciation of the demanding nature of this role by revisiting what he interpreted as the Church's expectation of its Catholic teachers. In his own words he explained their role and highlighted its magnitude while recognising the limitations of teachers in fulfilling it. He commented that their role was to *'transmit divine truth'* yet he recognised that this was being done *'through an agent which is not divine. It's a mortal being. Men and women....that's the delivery point...they're the key to it'*.

The Director's opinion was very similar and while reiterating the demanding nature of the Catholic teacher's role—and indeed, echoing the Bishop's recognition of their limitations—he expressed concern about the *response* of the Catholic teacher to an appreciation of the backgrounds of the children in their classes. In addition to many children in Catholic schools being 'un-churched', he explained that many who were nominally 'Catholic' were being brought up in homes that would not traditionally be recognised as environments promoting Catholic values:

the values that a lot of them have acquired, are certainly not values that we would find in the Gospels you know

This kind of *'alien culture'* he explained, could encourage a potentially dangerous response from teachers:

...in some cases, the danger is that I think teachers feel 'Oh well we better not talk about going to church because they don't go to church'. Or 'we better not talk about going to communion because..' you know, and it goes from there. Now as soon as you go down that road, you can stop teaching anything that's particularly Christian because if you're always making allowances. I think we have to go the other way. I think they have to say certainly we can be sensitive to the fact that not all of these kids are going to mass and are coming from families that are practising, but they enrolled them in the Catholic school. We say quite explicitly in this Catholic school, this is Catholic Christian

religious education, we're part of a community of faith so we will be involved in prayer and they will be taught prayer etcetera, etcetera. If that's not what you want for your children, that's fine you know. There are skills involved there I think. I think lots of teachers already show those skills, they've found ways of doing this sensitively, but we need to be watchful that they don't feel intimidated and therefore kind of dilute what they're doing. We're saying, 'well we'll not actually teach the morality of Christianity because that child's mother, you know the two adults aren't married, so we won't teach you know a kind of understanding of marriage you know'.

Echoing the sentiments of McLaughlin (1999) and Robinson (1997) explored in the previous chapter, the Director expressed concern about the possibility of Catholic schools diluting their particular and specific mission. He called for vigilance and argued that a strengthening of the identity of the Catholic school was needed. He emphasised that schools should be, in his opinion, places where the message of the Gospel is proclaimed and not in any diluted form. When asked directly about what he considered the role of the Catholic teacher to be, he answered

...it's about communicating Christ, you know and when you say that it sounds like a platitude, and you know when you say that to teachers they go, 'Oh what does that mean'. So I mean I suppose it's about helping people to have an experience of Christ, have an encounter with Christ. Not necessarily even through their formal religious education programme, although that's certainly an important part, but it's just in their being, in their person, you know in the way the teacher treats the child, with the dignity and with the respect you know and the worth and the value that they have for the child.

Both the Bishop and Director believed that the Catholic teacher should be an authentic witness to their faith. This, however, raises questions about the individuals' knowledge base and their own dispositions and lifestyles. Being a witness to faith implies knowledge of both the Gospels and of Church doctrine—an area that has been highlighted by many of the participants in the main study as a key focus for development. Indeed, the Director alluded to a lack of knowledge and understanding of Church teachings from new generations of Catholic teachers, even among those who remain committed to the traditions of their faith:

...it's assumed that they have the understanding, the commitment and everything else to do the job. We're in a very different age. They might have the commitment but they maybe don't have the understanding as they previously had and the challenges are all the harder...

There was also a recognition that Catholic teachers are human beings and have particular faults and failings. It was also acknowledged that some of those teaching in Catholic schools do not always live a lifestyle that is fully aligned to

that promoted by the Church. This was not singled out for criticism during the interviews and indeed the Bishop appeared to accept that this was the reality of the lives of many of the Catholic teaching force in Scotland when he referred to them as being ‘*mortal men and women, good, indifferent and whatever*’. What is important, according to these senior Church representatives, is that teachers’ own realities should not interfere with the ‘true’ message being transmitted. As the Director explained:

*...the teacher in the Catholic school is not delivering **their** own morality or **their** faith only as important as their faith is, it’s about how through them, they can deliver the teachings of the church. You know so it’s not **their** RE programme, **their** Sex Education programme, it’s the Church’s and you know I’m trying to say that in a way that doesn’t appear to be dogmatic. You know it can be difficult at times but I think we have to be fairly certain about that you know. So there may be things that they’re teaching that personally they might not have always agreed with. Well that’s ok for them but they keep that to themselves. They teach the Church’s approach to that particular issue. They can’t do anything else cause if they do anything else, we don’t have Catholic teaching. You know we have Joe Bloggs teaching.*

This raises a number of questions about the Church’s expectations of individual disposition and lifestyle and what is considered ‘acceptable’ in terms of being approved to teach in the Catholic school. At what point should a judgement be made about an individual’s lifestyle or beliefs and what are the implications of this? Mulligan (2005) believes that a ‘superficial faith understanding and fragile commitment’ (p226) exist worldwide among many Catholic teachers today, but he argues that this is not as a result of deliberate bad will on the part of the teacher. ‘It is simply that the post-Christian, secular culture has eroded the attitudes, behaviours and world view of many Catholic educators’ (ibid). However, it has also been stated that in order to be faithful to the integrity of the process of Catholic education, it is *not* necessary for teachers to be free of faults or failings since human weaknesses and sin are integral aspects of individual human existence (Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2002). While this is certainly a reasonable and realistic stance, it raises questions about what is and is not acceptable in terms of Catholic teachers’ values, and a number of issues arise, particularly when considering the Scottish context.

As outlined in Chapter Two, there exists what the Church would consider a stringent approval process in Scotland through which prospective Catholic teachers are expected to demonstrate their belief and character, and how it

enables them to teach in the Catholic school. The approval process includes a reference from a priest (SCES, 2008). However, the comments of both the Director and Bishop indicate an acceptance that in modern society certain aspects of individual belief and character are often *not* aligned with the Church's teachings. This questions the merit of the approval process as currently constituted or even the rationale for having such a process in the first place. Paradoxes become apparent here. On the one hand, there exists the expectation of the Catholic teacher to be an '*evangelist*', or a '*witness to faith*' providing an '*experience of Christ*'. On the other there is the acceptance that individuals' own positions and beliefs are not frequently aligned with what is being taught. The ability to be authentic and convincing in conveying Church teachings and being a witness to the Catholic faith will be varied. In essence, it would be reasonable to conclude that the nurture of faith would in these conditions run the risk of faltering—a concern about which the Director was particularly vocal.

Mulligan (2005) attempts to address this issue by highlighting the fact that while the faith journeys and individual dispositions of all Catholic teachers are very different there *will* exist common characteristics. The reality that these individuals are teaching in a Catholic school may indicate that most share a vision of Catholic education; that they understand Catholic education to be something fundamentally different; and that it is an important aspect of the Catholic Church's mission. According to Mulligan (2005), 'these fundamentals constitute the common faith journey of all Catholic educators and call for an ongoing conversation' (p227). The conversation for which he stresses the urgent need is otherwise known as faith formation. From this perspective, the Catholic school and Catholic education within it, are as much concerned with the faith development of its teachers as they are with that of its pupils.

What is interesting in terms of this study is that many of the Catholic teachers interviewed commented that any view of the role of the Catholic teacher similar to that advocated by the Director might promote hypocrisy and was not ultimately desirable. According to this view many children are able to recognise if what the teacher is conveying is what the teacher actually himself or herself believes. It has been recorded that some of those participating in the present

research had indicated that they were actively trying to realign their own particular lifestyle with that promoted by the Church as part of an ongoing personal journey.

Neglect

Particularly revealing throughout both interviews for this stage of the research, were the comments that Catholic teachers in Scotland have been ‘neglected’ by the Church in terms of the support they have received over the years. At an early stage in his interview, the Bishop was very vocal about this. He commented that the Catholic Church had not supported its teachers in the manner in which—according to him—they should have been supported. He indicated that this was something that had often been expressed by his late predecessor and that, although the establishment of SCES was making a difference, it was not enough:

‘We’ve failed to support teachers,’ he would say, and he was right. And we’re still in a sense doing a wee bit better now especially because we’ve got a professional service but... we’ve got a big job to do.

Responsibility

In terms of the allocation of responsibility for the development of the Catholic teacher’s faith, there was a difference of opinion. The Bishop commented that ultimately it was the responsibility of the bishop of each diocese with the support of a variety of different agencies including the RE advisors, the CEC and SCES. The Director, however, had a different perspective and laid this responsibility ultimately with the individual, explaining that, *‘you can’t do it to them you know’*. He did however comment there was the opportunity to *‘awaken in them that kind of realisation and that awareness, and gender that kind of commitment’*. Much of this, he argued, was down to the culture in the school and the leadership of the head teacher.

7.2.2 Awakenings

One of the categories that emerged from this part of the research resonated well with the findings from the main study. This was the phenomenon of ‘awakening’ someone’s faith. The Director of SCES shared his view that Catholic schools and their leaders within can provide opportunities to awaken the faith of an individual, particularly of those who may have turned their back on the Church

or who do not consider faith to be a core part of their lives. This study has indicated that this was precisely the case for a number of those teachers participating. Their initial teacher education (ITE) programme triggered a reflection on the issue of faith and, as has been recorded here, this often resulted in some sort of commitment to, or development in, faith. These faith ‘triggers’ or ‘awakenings’ as they are referred to in this chapter, punctuated many of the subjects’ working experiences during the period they were involved in the research. This finding clarified and supported the Director’s view that an ‘awakening’ of faith could, almost subconsciously, happen. He gave an example:

I think there have been examples of people who have drifted away from faith, and through their ITE experience of the faculty, maybe had their eyes opened a wee bit, people that have caused them to reflect on what impact faith has on their lives and, eh you know maybe to return to their practice. I’m sure I mean when you think about it ... they’re at seventeen eighteen years old you know, wondering what to do with their lives, determined to do something really positive about it. It’s such an important nurturing opportunity. And for them to come across people whom they see as intelligent, articulate, and actually able to talk about faith without appearing, without appearing eccentric and a bit do-lally. I think that’s a very powerful opportunity...

The Director spoke of the ‘*powerful impact*’ that such opportunities could have on others and stressed the need to increase ‘*the actual business of them getting opportunities to engage in faith practice...something that allows them to put their faith into action cause that’ll often be the hook, you know for more kind of spiritual and intellectual reflection.*’

Powerful Influences

This assertion, that there is the potential for the faith of individuals to be ‘powerfully influenced’ in the Catholic school, punctuated the Director’s interview throughout. In the first instance he referred to this when describing the impact that a teacher can have on the faith of others and most importantly on his or her pupils:

I think that influence is so powerful with teachers, among themselves as well as with young people. In my experience as a teacher, the things that made an impact on parents and teachers were not the lessons taught in the formal sense but the example and the impact that you had in an interpersonal way... It’s about showing love and the love of God, love of your neighbour in its simplest way...helping teachers to understand their personal impact is so important...

Of paramount importance according to the Director—and echoing the findings of this study—is the recognition of the power of the head teacher in influencing the faith of others:

I mean it is where the head teachers are absolutely paramount but I'm always wary of saying that cause it sounds as if the head teacher is the most important person. In one sense they are since they can allow so many things to happen....you're hoping that the head teacher's own influence can be positive on the staff generally and in the kind of opportunities that are given to young people, young teachers and em, you know if they go into that kind of culture where you know faith is something that's talked about, where it's seen to be part of the life, the identity, the culture of the school. Where they see the value of it in the way kids are treated, and not only what they're taught, but how they're taught you know.

The Director alluded to symbolic statements that head teachers can make that have the potential to have a powerful impact on faith. He recognised, however, that a significant number of head teachers were not confident or indeed competent in this area:

The teachers or the head teachers may themselves be personally very strong in their faith, but they may not be all that skilled and be able to connect that faith understanding to the latest educational initiative or you know, and that's the gap sometimes you know.

The findings from the main study highlighted the powerful impact that the *culture* of a school environment can have on the faith of individual teachers. Indeed, instances of individuals being proactive and admitting that they were more faith-committed as a result of being a part of a strong community where faith was promoted, have been discussed and recorded throughout the thesis. The Director had strong opinions on this and gave examples of how a school should be promoting faith:

Once they get into their profession, the absolute importance of where they are, the context they're in, the school they're in, the cause they're surrounded with, the priority that is given in the school to faith and faith development, the understanding even of that ...you're hoping that the kind of opportunities that are given to young people, young teachers and em, you know if they go into that kind of culture where you know faith is something that's talked about, where it's seen to be part of the life, the identity, the culture of the school. Where they see the value of it in the way kids are treated, and not only what they're taught, but how they're taught you know. I think that's, I think that's so important ...

According to the Director and the Bishop, the dispositions of teachers, the school leader and the overall culture of the school, have the potential to influence positively or negatively the faith of the individual. What was interesting, however, was the very 'future-oriented' language used, particularly by the

Bishop, when discussing this. Very little discussion surrounded any existing support mechanisms or initiatives in the area of faith development, but rather there was speculation about what *should* happen, indicating that this had not been a priority of the CEC before, strengthening the claim that this has been a neglected area:

So it's a big deal here. We've got to develop a kind of, what do you call it, a very clear understanding of a pact...

I think we need to develop an expertise in some areas not just about RE, for them, to have some other kind of role in addition to that...

Maybe some kind of person monitoring that aids [faith] development of teachers...

The Director, however, stressed supporting the promotion of faith in schools in an attempt to enhance their faith culture, providing opportunities potentially to 'awaken' in both staff and pupils an awareness of faith. This was underlined as a priority of SCES and an initiative addressing this same point was summarised and will be explored in more detail towards the end of this chapter.

Church Involvement

Examples of how the Church—at a diocesan level—had become more involved with newly qualified, probationer Catholic teachers were given. The Director indicated that there was an inconsistent level of support from the different dioceses and that the work of SCES was not always fully appreciated or given priority by bishops:

...there are diocesan masses for teachers you know Edinburgh had one I think on Monday night actually for teachers in Archdiocese of St Andrews & Edinburgh. Paisley have got one coming up in a couple of weeks time. Motherwell have got one coming up a couple of weeks after. Now that's just a kind of gathering I suppose but it's an opportunity to say, 'Thank you for making this commitment', you know. 'Well done for all that you've done for us' you know. To express appreciation of the Church. Em and part of the kind of battle that we've been fighting I suppose with the bishops and others, is to say you know look for too long the Church has taken for granted its Catholic teachers. You know it's assumed that they have the understanding, the commitment and everything else to do the job. We're in a very different age. They might have the commitment but they maybe don't have the understanding as they previously had it and the challenges are all the greater so we need to up their intake in terms of their encouragement and the appreciation they express...some of the dioceses do that better than others, just historically.

This revelation indicates that SCES places value in the direct contact of the Church with its teachers, and not just through its own work as a national

educational agency. Some of the participants did comment on the value of having the opportunity to come together with other Catholic teachers in worship. Even symbolically it had an impact on them. These occasions, however, appeared to be annual and focused on teachers in their probationary year.

In terms of opportunities for ‘awakening’ faith or triggering a faith response, then, the opinions from the Bishop and, in particular, the Director resonate with the results of the main research. The findings from the main part of the study, in fact, *confirm* that a school culture, the socialisation process upon which teachers embark and—in particular—the *leadership* of the school, have the potential to make a significant impact on the faith of an individual. Once again, the focus turned to the head teacher, as the Bishop and the Director offered their opinions regarding the work of those they have employed—in conjunction with the local authorities—to be responsible for their schools.

7.2.3 Leadership

The opinions of both participants regarding the importance of the role of the head teacher, in creating appropriate conditions for the development of faith in their schools, has already been highlighted. According to both, the head teachers are the ‘*key*’ to ensuring that this happens but each recognises that support is required for head teachers to understand this and in turn, create such faith development opportunities.

Support

The Bishop was not convinced that head teachers were aware of their contribution to the development of their staff with regards to faith:

... the delivery point's going to have to come like in terms of em getting head teachers to acknowledge their responsibility for the faith development of the school...

When explaining that he considers it to be their responsibility to *monitor* the faith development of Catholic teaching staff, the Bishop revealed that the support that head teachers were receiving was not adequate:

I've got a wee bit of sympathy for head teachers and I'll tell you why. There's lots and lots of support out there for teachers. Lots now. But where's the support for head teachers? I don't see it. Except in so far as they support one another.

Interestingly, the Bishop had previously recorded that it was ultimately the responsibility of the bishop of each diocese for the development of the faith of teaching staff, so again, it appears that he is apportioning blame to himself for any shortcomings.

The Director was equally vocal about the requirement for adequate support for head teachers. However, he presented a number of strategies that had already been employed, to alert head teachers to the need to be aware of the Catholic dimension of their school and of the promotion of faith within it:

...you do rely on the head teacher being the person who is prepared to say this is a Catholic school so in our development plan, there will always be something to do with the faith, the mission of the school, the identity of the school, the culture of the school, that will always be there. Now it isn't always there in every school. But it should be there and part of I think what we're trying to keep coming back to is this notion what are you about as a Catholic school, and everything else can connect to that. Rather than thinking about that at the end of it all...it takes quite a bit of development I think with head teachers to kind of clue into that, and to feel alright okay, em they might know that there are questions to be asked but they might not know what the questions are some of them. You know that's the starting point. It should be the starting point. How does this [new initiative] connect to what we're about as a Catholic community of faith? I mean the what we're trying to do is to make sure they're getting opportunities to think about those kind of questions, to reflect on those. Now we do that in partnership with say the Head Teacher Associations and their conferences and things...

Obstacles and inconsistencies

The Director expressed concern about the consistency among head teachers in responding to any support for promoting the faith dimension of their schools. He commented that some head teachers were confident in this area and committed to giving it a high profile, ensuring that their starting point was always that their school was operating as a faith community. Other schools, according to the Director, did not have the promotion of 'faith' as a priority and much of this he attributed to the direction and commitment of the heads. He described some 'obstacles' that existed and the most 'immediate' of these being the responsibility of head teachers to read and respond to any advice or literature being produced and distributed from SCES:

You know we did a presentation on it last week at the Primary Heads Conference ... and there were primary heads there that were saying 'I don't know anything about this.' Now I had sent them frequent information about this, both by mail and internet and all the rest of it so you think well why do you not know anything about it, you know. Now if

they're saying that, what are the chances of any of that filtering through? You know... part of the ongoing thing is to make sure that our head teachers and our new head teachers are aware of where the support is and are ready, you know see it as important, and see it as an opportunity to plan and make their colleagues aware of it you know.

This was obviously a source of frustration for the Director, particularly since he believed that attention to this issue could have the potential to produce positive results. The present study has indeed confirmed this, by highlighting the impact that environments, particularly where the promotion of faith is a high priority, can have on the religious dispositions of staff. In pointing to the future, he presented an initiative in its early stage that, in his opinion, will raise the profile of the religious dimension of Catholic Schools in Scotland, and in turn help support the development of the Catholic teacher's faith. This 'project', as he referred to it, is the production of a set of performance indicators that *monitors* the promotion of the Catholic faith in schools. The argument presented for this is that these indicators

...will help schools to ask themselves the right kind of questions about how good is RE? What are we doing? What about the other aspects of faith? How can we, what are the questions we should be asking? That kind of thing and you know if that kind of takes off, we can maybe kind of spread that a bit you know. But I think unless we actually build in an expectation that it is going to be monitored, you know just as people get twitchy about talking to their council about attainment, attendance, whatever, you know so. Part of that discussion should be and how does this school develop into a Catholic school?... part of the job of this project is to try to develop the kinds of questions that can be part of that discussion. You know along with the other quality indicators. How does this Catholic school deliver Catholic Education em in the widest sense... and well we're not going to return to the days of flying visits from priests that came in and inspected religious instruction but I actually think there is a value in saying well it is going to be monitored and it will be sampled in some kind of way you know.

In essence, this changes significantly the remit of SCES to include a 'quality assurance' or 'inspectorate' role, where it assesses the quality of a school's culture in relation to its Catholicity. The Director commented that he expected that this would be met with opposition.

7.2.4 Political Implications

Both Church representatives considered the faith development of teachers to be part of their *professional* development and part of a head teacher's CPD budget should—according to the Director—be used for this. What was significant, however, was his view of the apparent acceptance of this by local authorities. He explained that schools should be able to

commit CPD budgets appropriately to that and certainly, in discussion with councils, that is never an issue. I mean I think they would share that understanding. They would expect schools to manage it appropriately... you know it's about prioritising resources then with not only money for CPD budgets but time. You know where in the schools professional development time is there a commitment to faith. Lots of schools now would take at least one of the in-service days or a part of one of the in-service days and formally commit it to a kind of faith inset or some kind of session.

The Bishop gave an illustration of local councils supporting the faith development of Catholic teachers financially. He explained that his own diocese hosts an annual in-service day (which includes reflection on faith and the celebration of Mass) for probationers. This event is advertised and financed by the local authority in which most of the diocesan schools are located.

Positive relationship

The working relationship between Church and state regarding Catholic Education in Scotland has strengthened substantially over the past twenty years, particularly as a result of joint policy initiatives where both have been the major stakeholders (Coll & Davis, 2007). The creation of the National 5-14 Guidelines in the early nineties found Catholic Church doctrine being presented and published under the auspices of the Scottish Government (then known as the Scottish Office Education Department) through the creation of the Religious Education guidelines for Roman Catholic schools (SOED, 1994). This was not an isolated occurrence. In 2004, the Scottish Government announced another major review of the whole curriculum in Scotland, producing an outline statement of principles and objectives entitled *A Curriculum for Excellence* (SEED, 2004). In May 2008, the CEC and Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS—the Scottish Government's advisory body on the curriculum) released a set of 'draft outcomes and experiences' on Catholic Religious Education spanning both primary and secondary schooling (LTS, 2008) and again rooted in Church doctrine.

The positive working relationship that the Scottish Government and Catholic Church seem to enjoy was further endorsed in 2008 by Scotland's First Minister, Alex Salmond when, at the annual Cardinal Winning Lecture—hosted by the Religious Education department at the University of Glasgow as part of the yearly Catholic Education Week initiative—Alex Salmond, without reservation,

‘celebrated’ Catholic schools in Scotland and concluded that they ‘will always have my support and the support of my government’ (Salmond, 2008). This relationship has no doubt been strengthened by the creation of SCES, but the fact that it does exist, in addition to the examples given by both the Director and the Bishop suggesting that the Scottish Government is supportive of any initiatives particular to the Catholic School—including the strengthening of its identity—is significant. It could be argued, then, that there does not seem to be any inherently ‘political’ objection for CPD funding to be used for the faith development of Catholic teachers in contemporary Scotland.

CPD focus

There are, of course, other factors that must be highlighted when considering financing or supporting such CPD initiatives. One particular challenge, as outlined in Chapter Two, is the CPD focus of schools in Scotland. It has been argued (Humes, 2001) that the Scottish CPD framework is concerned with the mastery of technical skills that do not challenge teachers to explore or verbalise their own thoughts about the teaching and learning process, but rather encourages them to be passive learners. In addition, the present thesis has been written during a phase of much more rationed CPD brought on by the pressures of budgetary restraint. This raises questions about how areas such as the faith development of teachers can be adequately addressed in schools when they are competing with so many other concerns, some of which are national educational priorities.

There will obviously be other CPD implications for those charged with the governance of education in local authorities and at a national level. This thesis chose not to emphasise these views or expectations. However a follow-up or sequel to this research is encouraged to study the politics of CPD, in the context of faith-based education in Scotland.

7.3 Commentary

The identity of Catholic schools in Scotland is continually questioned. Present day societal realities such as cultural pluralism and secularisation, along with the presence of large numbers of children who are not Catholic or even Christian in

the school environment, challenge those involved in Catholic education to reflect on the purpose of Catholic schools and on their distinctive mission and identity. Indeed, the present study has highlighted the existence of different and contrasting understandings of what it means to be ‘Catholic’ for both individuals and for communities of faith in modern democratic societies.

Lieven Boeve (2006) has recently reflected on the identity of Catholic institutions against the backdrop of contemporary secularisation. He presents an overview of four ways in which contemporary Catholic schools, and indeed other Catholic institutions, can realise and express their identity. These are: (1) institutional secularisation, (2) institutional reconfessionalisation, (3) values education from a Christian perspective and (4) identity formation in a plural context. What follows is a short explanation of each.

Institutional secularisation occurs, according to Boeve, when the Catholic school renounces any ideological or confessional characterisation in order to become a *neutral* institution. Specifically ‘Catholic’ or Christian symbolism is removed and any Catholic ethos or charism no longer plays an explicit role in the education of children. Religion is ‘studied’ rather than any belief promoted and inherent Catholic identity is consolidated into the implicit foundation of the school.

Institutional reconfessionalisation describes, Boeve proposes, schools at the other end of the spectrum, which are *led by* Catholics and are *for* Catholics. Within these schools, the majority of pupils and staff are Catholic and celebrations of faith, in conjunction with the wider faith community, are common occurrences. Religious Education is in the form of catechesis with the prime objective of assisting children in deepening and developing their own faith. Boeve (2006) recommends that such schools should be vigilant since he warns that this particular Catholic identity runs the risk of schools becoming ghettoised.

A *values education from a Christian perspective* identity emerges when a school integrates its Catholic ideals into a more general set of Christian values in order to become more attractive to non-Catholics. Typically, such schools make strong

commitments to issues of justice and peace and participate in much charity work. The risk for this kind of identity is that faith is reduced to something that is purely human, to human values, eschewing the explicit formation among the community of a relationship with God. Beove (ibid) argues that such an identity need not in fact have a specific 'Christian' label at all but might be thoroughly assimilated into a humanistic ethos consistent with the liberal educational principles of almost any school.

Identity formation in a plural context. This is when the school or institution recognises the plurality of its staff and pupils and the effects of secularisation, while still actively promoting its Catholic identity. Such schools value their plurality as an enrichment of the school's profile and both pupils and staff are encouraged to explore and express their own religious—or non-religious—identities and to engage in dialogue with the goal of preparing pupils for active participation in a diverse society. While the majority of school members no longer need to be Catholic, the school retains its 'Catholic' identity principally by being of *service* to society. Religious identity in this model has been attenuated into a much more cosmopolitan understanding of it.

Much has been written about the identity of Catholic schools and indeed there have been other models suggested to describe the complex forces to which Catholic schools are currently subject (Treston, 1997; Horst, 1995, Gommers & Hermans, 2003). The relatively recent and influential presentation of four different models by Boeve (2006) is currently being considered in the implementation of a large study in Melbourne, Australia, supported by Leuven University (Belgium) in conjunction with the Catholic Education Office (CEO) in Melbourne. The study is entitled *Measuring the Catholicity of Catholic Schools* (Pollefeyt, 2008) and is being conducted as part of a Catholic school improvement initiative.

When considering the models developed by Boeve (2006) in light of the findings from this chapter, the comparative chapter and indeed, those from the main study, it could—and most likely *would*—be argued that the Catholic Church in Scotland considers its schools to be very much aligned to the second of the four

models, *institutional reconfessionalism*. Evidence for this assertion includes the legal power possessed by the Church over the appointment of teachers and in the regulation of the RE curriculum. In addition, teachers require approval to teach in the Catholic sector. Those interviewed instinctively considered their role—arrived at via their own experience—to be authentic and authoritative witnesses to their faith and there exists the requirement to teach a national, ecclesiastically-approved syllabus, which uses the ‘language of the Church’ (Cunnane, 2004:80), is catechetical in nature and has the development of the faith of Catholic children at its heart. The risk this model has of schools becoming ‘ghettoised’ could arguably be diminished in the Scottish context, owing to such schools operating within a state system and, through the work of SCES, engaging in all national educational developments. As well as this, Catholic schools in Scotland are open to non-Catholics and there are, in fact, large numbers of non-Catholics and indeed non-*Christians* attending the schools across the country, making them inevitably pluralistic in nature. As is evident from this chapter, however, the implications of this pluralism have raised some concerns and leaders within the schools have been encouraged to be vigilant about the possible dilution of the Catholic message, owing to the attendance of large numbers of children from non-Catholic or non-traditionally-Catholic backgrounds in attendance. The anticipated introduction of performance indicators intended to measure the Catholicity of schools is a mechanism to be put in place to support the promotion of an explicitly and distinctively Catholic identity. This development would certainly support the assertion that the ethos of the Catholic school in Scotland is located in the second of Boeve’s four models, that is, *institutional reconfessionalism*.

From the limited yet indicative findings of the comparative study, there is evidence to suggest that the schools in which the participants in NSW were teaching varied significantly from one another but, for the majority, their schools’ identities would appear to sit most comfortably with the third or fourth of Boeve’s (2006) models, that is *Values education from a Christian perspective* or *Identity formation in a plural context*. The evidence for this has come from the accounts of the teachers themselves, given that the faith of a significant number of participants appeared to be much less aligned to the traditional

expectations of the Church, or that they considered their role in the Catholic school to be concerned with the promotion of human values, rather than nurturing a particular faith commitment. The study carried out in Melbourne will, of course, say much more about the faith identity of both Catholic schools *and* their Catholic staff, and its contribution to the field of Catholic Education will, no doubt, be of considerable worth.

These observations based on the findings of this thesis have been made to further illustrate the important point that different forms of Catholic school identity exist widely in various parts of the world. It is clear from this research that the historical narratives, faith positions, dispositions and attitudes of those within Catholic schools have a significant impact on the culture of the school, the faith of those within and the overall promotion of a particular identity. It is also apparent that the identity of the Catholic school can have a significant impact on the identity of the teacher. What is emerging from additional research findings, however, is a shift in the identity of many Catholic schools, owing to their increasingly pluralistic nature and the changing character of the societies in which they are located. This shift incorporates much more inclusive and open approaches to other faiths and practices, at the expense, it is argued, of the promotion of a singularly confessional identity (Gommers & Hermans, 2003). While many are supportive of such a shift, arguing that Catholic schools that view their plurality as enriching represents a positive change, many Church authorities are calling for vigilance in order to ensure that the Catholic faith continues to be emphasised and that its passage from one generation to the next remains a priority. From the results of this study it has emerged that the ongoing faith development of Catholic teachers will be central to the achievement of this goal.

This chapter has explored the expectations of two senior representatives of the Catholic Church regarding the role of the Catholic teacher and the development of his/her faith. The perspective of the Director very much aligned with the broader findings of this study. His view that the leader in the school, along with its overall culture, had the potential to have a powerful influence and ‘awaken’ in the teacher some awareness of faith, has been confirmed by the findings of this

research. The level of inconsistency of experience among the participants with regard to this was also recognised, and both he and the chairman of the Catholic Education Commission agreed that additional support for head teachers in considering the Catholic identity of their school, encompassing the faith development of staff, is a requirement.

There was no question that the faith of Catholic teachers *should* be developed. There was no concern regarding the government's acceptance that this kind of development is considered *professional* development. There was no doubt that any initiative to help support the faith development of teachers would ultimately contribute to raising the overall Catholic profile and identity of the school. What was made equally apparent, however, was that this is an area that historically has been neglected, a problem that many of the participants believe is still unresolved today. An arguably significant and fresh initiative in the form of Catholic performance indicators, soon to be used in the Catholic sector in Scotland, has been identified and presented as a way of consolidating the Catholic dimension of the school. As suggested in Chapter Four, this will no doubt be a controversial development if consideration is given to the pressures with which Scottish school leaders are currently faced on a day-to-day basis, as they respond to the challenges from the state, and the struggle they have with prioritising and juggling a variety of different but important initiatives. It could be argued that such an intervention is conforming to the 'technicist' or 'performativity' model of teaching warned of in the introduction to this thesis, one that produces educators who are expected constantly to deliver 'centrally packaged decisions' and respond to 'targets, indicators and evaluations' (Ball 2003:215). In addition, whether such indicators can capture the powerful symbolic and spontaneous faith influences that have been recorded in this thesis as having a significant impact on the faith of individuals, remains to be seen. What is also unclear is the level of support that will be committed to Catholic teachers in Scotland. Developing their theological literacy and knowledge of the Catholic faith in order to teach authoritatively, and nurturing their ability to live their faith in order to witness authentically to future generations of children in Catholic schools has been identified as something they need and something they desire and that they themselves see as fundamental to their development.

They are waiting to respond.

Chapter 8

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Conclusion

This study has focused on one aspect of the inner life of the teacher, an area that is currently generating wide and growing interest in its relationship to the effectiveness of schools (Mills *et al* 2004, Dadds 1997, Voiels 1996). It tells the story of the faith journeys of individuals drawn from a new generation of Catholic teachers in Scotland, and reveals their associated development needs as they continue along their chosen career path within the teaching profession.

The main participants commenced this study as students in the final stages of their teacher education programme, excited about the prospect of entering the teaching profession and expectant of the support and professional development that they would receive. Their social backgrounds and faith biographies had many similarities and the majority were typical of the Catholic community in Scotland, a community that has its own distinctive historical narrative. Different levels of faith commitment were recorded at an early stage, spanning a spectrum where at one end individuals were described as *faith confident* and the other end, *faith insecure*. All considered their role as a *Catholic* teacher to be a challenge and, in the initial stages, many indicated they were lacking in confidence or had concerns regarding their knowledge and ability successfully to realise this role. They had high expectations regarding the support they would receive from their school in this particular area of development. By the end of the study, the same individuals displayed increased levels of *confidence* in articulating their faith positions but exposed very different and inconsistent experiences of the support they had received in this area. During the final stages of the research, and based on their own experiences, all were in agreement as to the central features of their role as Catholic teachers, principally to teach authentically and authoritatively—features aligned very much with the view of the institutional Church.

Throughout this study, significant developments and shifts in the faith of participants were documented, illustrating the powerful impact that the culture of a school—and in particular the faith leadership within—can have on the individual. The socialisation process upon which new teachers embarked has been recorded as potentially having the power to ‘trigger’ a stronger awareness of faith, to shape individuals’ views and even to alter or change their ‘personal

frames of reference' (Janssens, 2004: 147) with regard to faith. While very few examples of formal CPD activity focusing primarily on the faith development of individuals were given, the transformational impact that informal, symbolic and routine faith promotion had on the attitudes and behaviour of some of the individuals was striking.

One of the most important outcomes of this research has been confirming that the role of the head teacher, and the overall leadership of the Catholic school, is key to the faith development of the teacher. Much has been written about school leadership, and indeed most especially of that in the Catholic school (O'Keefe, 1999; Grace, 1996; McLaughlin, 1998; Johnson & Castelli, 2000) and the effect of this on the overall culture of the school. This study has, however, gone further and has provided evidence that the leadership of the Catholic school has the potential substantially to influence and develop the *faith* of teachers if they choose to respond. It has identified the ways in which head teachers and other school leaders who offered an appropriate mix of faith development support—both formally and informally (via symbolic, verbal and non verbal behaviour)—enabled an *awakening* of faith within some of their new teachers and, informally, encouraged a *response* to this. To those who were already faith-active, this support provided an environment in which they were able to express and develop their faith fully and without reservation. It is being argued here, then, that the Catholic school, through its leadership and overall culture, has the potential significantly to add to 'sources of spiritual capital' (Grace, 2002:237) accessed by individuals and to encourage a response to this. Conversely, the study has also exposed consistency issues, highlighting that some schools and their leaders do not consider the school's faith dimension as a priority, but rather as an 'add-on', leaving many teachers feeling isolated and embarrassed to discuss faith issues with other staff, or indeed with children.

Perhaps a surprise of the thesis has been the overall faith commitment of participants, given the increasingly secularised, globalised and pluralistic Scotland in which they live. In consequence, it is possible to argue that the re-establishment of identity among people is a live issue and that evidence of a thirst for some kind of belonging, attachment or anchorage exists in the

globalised society. Scotland's own historical narrative, it is acknowledged, is unique, partially accounting for the high proportion of Church attendance among participants. An additional contributing factor to the faith commitment of those participating in this study, moreover, has been the positive impact of the individuals' experiences in schools. The research has listened to the voices of many new teachers who have stated clearly that their commitment to the Catholic faith and its associated traditions has deepened as a direct result of the school in which they find themselves teaching.

The final outcome from this study has been the overwhelming recognition, by every category of participant, that Catholic teachers in Scotland require substantial support to develop their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith, of Church doctrine, Church teachings and of Scripture. These teachers are, for the most part, products of Catholic schools themselves where the RE curriculum they encountered was typically post-Vatican II, where the focus was on faith journeys and relationships with God and others, rather than any exhaustive understanding of the Catechism or Church Doctrine. While the RE component of their initial teacher education programmes would claim at least to begin to address this bias, and indeed many participants highlighted the ways in which they had been stimulated and challenged by the RE input, only so much can be covered in such short durations and gaps in knowledge and understanding have been identified as being a concern and an area requiring significant support. It is possible that this finding echoes analysis of other areas of the contemporary curriculum (Lingard *et al*, 2003).

8.1.1 Reflection on the research process

Having reflected on the outcomes of this study, the overall research process will briefly be discussed with its focus being the mode of data collection and analysis and its perceived limitations.

The nature of the study and particularly of its conduct over a long period of time, enabling re-entry into the field of study at different intervals, allowed for the development of categories and further exploration of concepts that were beginning to emerge. This approach, in addition to the practice of re-interviewing

the same subjects over a three-year period, facilitated the development of positive working relationships between the researcher and participants and enhanced the quality of the generated data.

The systematic approach to data analysis offered by Strauss and Corbin (1998) proved to be extremely worthwhile, and the structure it suggested was adopted and used to generate categories, concepts and theory. All stages in the research were subjected to this and the researcher developed her interviewing technique via the pilot study (Chapter Four) by way of implementing and refining this particular approach.

8.1.2 Limitations

This study was conducted in a robust and comprehensive manner, yet it is important in the implementation of any research project to acknowledge its limitations. For this particular study, the following limitations were apparent:

- While the findings of this study will be of interest to Catholic education in general, the recommendations are related to the Scottish context in particular, chosen because of its unique placing within a state sector.
- The comparative study was limited in terms of sample-size and the development of individuals' faith in NSW was not tracked. Ideally, a direct comparison with the main study in terms of volume of participants and timing would have been desirable. However, as the thesis has already stated, the results from this particular stage were indicative only.
- The research focused on the experiences of those choosing to undertake their initial teacher education at the designated institution for Catholic education in Scotland, the University of Glasgow. There is, however, a minority of intending Catholic teachers in Scotland who choose to study elsewhere, but undertake the distance learning Catholic Teachers Certificate course (CREDL), offered by the University of Glasgow. These teachers were not included as part of the study.

- The study chose not to focus on the perspectives and practices of representatives from the Scottish Government with regard to CPD for the purposes of faith development. It is acknowledged that this additional dimension may have added value to the findings.

8.1.3 Personal Reflections (in the first person)

In terms of personal development, this study has had a significant impact on my own skills and knowledge in this particular field. I have further developed my ability effectively to conduct semi-structured interviews and have become skilled in analysing large volumes of qualitative data. In addition, the work has allowed me to find my professional voice and has developed the manner in which it is expressed. I have grown in confidence, have challenged and changed my personal perspective in relation to a number of issues and have learned much from my supervisors in terms of conducting a study of this nature.

8.2 Recommendations

In light of the findings from this research and the context in which Catholic teachers in Scotland are placed, the following recommendations are being made for different stakeholders in the field of Catholic education, with reference to the faith development of teachers:

Head teachers

- Through reflection on research such as this, head teachers should be aware of the degree to which the outward adherence to their faith impacts on the Catholic teacher.
- Head teachers should keep their own knowledge of their faith replenished and sophisticated.
- Head teachers of Catholic schools should be proactive in ensuring that there are suitable and frequent opportunities for staff to gather as a community of faith.
- Head teachers to be reminded of their responsibility to be accountable, not only to the state but to the Church and to give priority to the faith dimension of their schools, if the objectives of Catholic education are to be realised.

Scottish Government

- Formal opportunities provided for head teachers to be given time away from school to reflect on their role as Catholic school leaders.
- The Government and SCES to work together to put initiatives in place to *support* head teachers in their pursuit of effective faith leadership.
- Formal CPD opportunities to be given to Catholic teachers to develop their knowledge and understanding of the modern Catholic faith.
- Explicit recognition that the faith development of the Catholic teacher is an appropriate and approved CPD activity

Catholic Church

- The Church should provide much more explicit guidance on appropriate faith development activities, as these relate to CPD structures and requirements.
- The RE programmes delivered in schools should have a balanced approach between faith journeys and relationships with God (and others), and an introduction to Church doctrine, systematic theology and catechesis.
- The Church should improve on its investment in activities to support the development of the head teacher from a faith perspective.

Teachers

- The teacher should seek appropriate opportunities both within the school context and beyond to develop their own knowledge and understanding of Church teachings.
- The teacher should be open to responding to faith development opportunities.
- The teacher should make a commitment to developing a critical, theological and scriptural literacy.

8.2.1 Suggestions for Further Research

There are a number of areas that this study could have explored further but, owing to time and word limitations, this was not feasible. For example, the level of knowledge of Church teachings among newly qualified Catholic teachers was

not an integral part of this thesis but would merit further research in its own right. It is recommended that the criteria for assessing or developing the Catholicity of a school be explored further, particularly in light of the proposed initiatives from SCES. The relationship between knowledge and belief is also an interesting concept and worthy of additional research. This thesis demonstrated that many Catholic teachers, hoping to teach in Catholic schools, find themselves in the nondenominational sector. A study on the impact of their faith on the nondenominational environment, and vice versa, would again be of significant (if controversial) interest. It was an area for which space in this thesis was not available. As mentioned previously, this study did not focus on the perspectives of Government representatives for CPD for the purposes of faith development. Further exploration of this would be of value.

Any means by which a deeper understanding of the interplay of faith and education is arrived at would be a welcome addition to the field of Catholic Education. It is hoped that this study has succeeded in achieving this.

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APPENDIX 1

UNIVERSITY *of* GLASGOW

Faculty of Education

Ethics Committee For Non Clinical Research Involving Human Subjects

EAP2 NOTIFICATION OF ETHICS APPLICATION FORM APPROVAL

Application No. *(Research Office use only)*

E 239

Period of Approval *(Research Office use only)*

17.12.04 to 31.12.07

Date: 17.12.2004

Dear Roisin

I am writing to advise you that your EAP1 application for ethical approval, reference E239 for 'A Comparative Study of the needs of Catholic Educators in the evolving CPD Structure of Scottish Teacher Education' has been approved.

Please ensure that you retain this approval notification for future reference.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me in the Research Office and I will pass them onto the Faculty's Ethics Committee.

Regards

Jackie Duff
Ethics Secretary
Faculty of Education Research Office

Faculty of Education Research Office
University of Glasgow
Room 425B
St Andrew's Building, 11 Eldon Street, Glasgow, G3 6NH

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Wednesday, 14 June 2006

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Dear Ms. Coll,

Re: Ethics permission to approach our final year student teachers

I have examined your ethics application and I am pleased to approve permission for you to approach our final year student teachers. If you have not done so already, I suggest you approach the Head of School of Education, Dr. Maree Nicholson, in order to make contact with the relevant students and staff. I note you have already made contact with Dr. Graham English, who may be happy to facilitate your access to the students. In order for you to access teachers in schools, you will need to seek permission from the Catholic Education Office in Sydney, as well as the principals of the schools involved.

I wish you success in your research.

Yours sincerely,



Associate Professor Janis Ozolins,
Chair, HREC

APPENDIX 2

Participant Consent Form

Project title: *A comparative study of the needs of Catholic Educators in the evolving CPD structures of Scottish Teacher Education.*

Investigator: *Roisín Coll*
Department of Religious Education
University of Glasgow
0141 330 3080 / 3434
r.coll@educ.gla.ac.uk

The purpose of this research project is to investigate the continuing professional development (CPD) needs of Catholic teachers in Scotland. You will be asked questions regarding your own faith formation and its development. Tape recordings of the interviews will not be shared with any person other than the investigator however the final report, containing anonymous quotations, will be available at the end of the study in the form of a thesis and journal or conference publications.

There may be no direct benefits to the participants of this study. This interview will contribute to the development of a thesis that will analyse the CPD needs of Catholic educators in Scotland.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT I, -----
-

(Print name)

- am aware that my contribution is for research purposes only
- agree to have my interviews tape recorded for the use of the investigator only
- understand that my interviews will be anonymised
- am aware that confidentiality of any information I give will be provided subject to legal implications
- am aware that participation in this project is voluntary and I am free to withdraw consent at any time or withdraw any data supplied.

Participant's

Signature:.....

Date:

Investigator's

Signature:.....

Date :

Project title: *A comparative study of the needs of Catholic Educators in the evolving CPD structures of Scottish Teacher Education.*

Investigator: *Roisín Coll*
Department of Religious Education
University of Glasgow

This project requires the participation of Roman Catholic students in the final year of the BEd (Honours) course or students on the PGCE course. Thirty students will be involved in total - fifteen students planning to teach in the primary sector in Scotland and fifteen will be planning to teach in the secondary.

A general invitation will be extended to students falling into these categories.

The following points will explain more about participants' contribution during the project.

- The project will be conducted over a 3 year period.
- The investigator will conduct one or two interviews a year with each of the participants. They will occur in the first academic term of each year or the last academic term of each year.
- The investigator will travel to meet the participant.
- Each interview will last for a **maximum** period of an hour.
- Each interview will be tape recorded for the use of the investigator only.
- Participants' interviews will be anonymised.
- Confidentiality of information will be provided (subject to legal implications).
- This project is not connected in any way to participants' coursework and involvement in it will not affect ongoing assessment.
- Participation in this project is voluntary and participants are free to withdraw consent at any time or withdraw any data supplied.

If at anytime participants have concerns about the conduct of this research project they can contact the Ethics Officer at the address below:

***Professor Rex Whitehead
Ethics Officer
Centre for Science Education
Faculty of Education,
University of Glasgow***

Roisín Coll
Department of Religious Education
r.coll@educ.gla.ac.uk
0141 330 3080 / 3434

APPENDIX 3

Dear

My name is Roisín Coll and I am a lecturer in the Department of Religious Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Glasgow.

As part of a PhD study I am researching the area of Continuing Professional Development for teachers in the Catholic School and I am hoping to interview a number of primary and secondary head teachers in relation to this. My research takes place in the context of the recent major innovations in CPD, an area that remains under researched. The findings are intended to contribute to a better understanding of the issues and will be of value to all interested in Catholic Education.

Would it be possible to meet with you at sometime in the near future to interview you on this subject? (I can assure you that when interpreting the data the interview will be referred to anonymously.) I am fully aware of your very busy schedule so I am willing to meet with you whenever it might be convenient.

If you are willing to be interviewed then please contact me at the address at the bottom of this page or if easier, email me: r.coll@educ.gla.ac.uk

Best regards,

Roisín Coll
Lecturer in Religious Education

APPENDIX 4

Interview Questions – Stage One

1. What course are you completing?
2. Why did you choose to teach in a Catholic school?
3. What is the difference between teaching in the Catholic school and in the nondenominational sector?
4. What do you see as your main responsibilities or role once you are qualified as a Catholic teacher?
5. At present do you feel prepared to carry out these responsibilities?
6. Tell me about the concept of developing your own faith in relation to teaching in a Catholic school?
7. What input has this course had in terms of your own faith formation?
8. Prior to coming on this course, how much faith formation had you experienced and where did this come from?
9. Will it support you in your career?
10. Are you expecting to receive support in this area once you qualify?
11. Where will you expect this support to come from?
12. *'Bound by charity to one another and to their students, and penetrated by an apostolic spirit, let them give witness to Christ, the unique Teacher, by their lives as well as their teachings.'* (The Documents of Vatican II)

What do you think about this?

13. Should faith formation be an activity Catholic teachers should be involved in together or is it a private and personal matter?
14. Will it be a priority development as you pursue your own career?

Interview Questions – Stage Two

For those in ND School

How are you feeling having ended up in a ND school?
What are your short-term career aspirations?

ALL

Self

1. Has your understanding of your role as a Catholic teacher changed?
2. Tell me about how you feel you are carrying out your role as a Catholic teacher?
3. Have you sought to develop your own faith since commencing teaching?
If so, in what ways?
4. Tell me what you believe the importance of developing your own faith is in relation to teaching.
5. Are you aware of the development opportunities (CPD) available in this area? Can you name as CPD development opportunities – get specifics if they say yes.

School

6. How have you been supported in this role?
7. Do you perceive that the faith development of teachers a priority of the school?
8. What does the school expect you to do be doing to ensure faith development is taking place?
9. Tell me about the opportunities you have had to share with others in faith activities?
10. Are you aware of any others in the school that are actively engaged in faith development? see 5 above

Context

11. How do you think that your faith has been influenced by the geographical context in which you have been brought up? (West of Scotland)
12. How does the media attention that Catholic schools in Scotland attract affect Catholic teachers?

Interview Questions – Stage Three

1. I'm interested in finding out more about your role as a Catholic teacher.
Tell me about the variety of ways in which you interact with children on a daily basis. What is specifically Catholic about this? (or how does faith (yours and/or the children's) affect these relationships?)
2. What is it about the leadership of this school that is specifically Catholic?
How does this impact on your own role if at all?
3. What impact on your own faith does teaching ethos / culture in this school have?
Worship
Prayer
Priest
Discussions
4. Tell me about the formal or informal faith development opportunities you have had since we last met.
5. Tell me about the presence of the priest in this school and/ or the links with the local parish. How does this affect your role?

Interview Questions – Stage Four

Catholic Schools

Tell me about your faith position at this moment in time and how it compares with how it was when you left University.

Tell me about the faith development opportunities you have had since we last met, both in school and out with the school context.

I'm interested in the leadership in the school with regards to your faith development. How has it assisted or had an impact on this? *Probe: What kind of activities make an impact?*

I'm also interested in other support networks in the school that may exist that have affect your faith.

How is the Catholic faith lived in the school?
Probe: How would you like this to be lived?

How does this school compare with the other schools you have been in with regards to faith development?

Tell me about the support you have received both formally and informally in relation to faith development.
Probe: Any courses, links with RE dept if in Sec. sector, priest. What about out with the school environment?

Tell me what you believe to be the role of the Catholic teacher and if your understanding of this has changed in the last 3 years.

Have you been given the opportunity to carry out this role in the school?

Should faith development of Catholic teachers be considered part of their *professional* development?

Round 4 interviews – Non Denominational Schools

Tell me about your faith position at this moment in time and how it compares with how it was when you left University.

Tell me about the faith development opportunities you have had since we last met, both in school and out with the school context.

You are currently teaching in the ND sector. Tell me why you are in this school?
Probe: Was it a conscious decision to do so? Why?

What are your short term career aspirations? Tell me about your position and how you now feel about teaching in the Catholic school.

How do you consider yourself in this school – Is it as a Catholic teacher or is it something different?

What are the differences between teaching in a Catholic and ND school? What are the differences with regard to your own faith development?

What impact does teaching in a ND school have on your faith?

What communication do you receive from the diocese or from other Catholic educational bodies? *Probe: how do feel about this?*

Tell me what you believe to be the role of the Catholic teacher and if your understanding of this has changed in the last 3 years.

Should faith development of Catholic teachers be considered part of their *professional* development?